OUR FREEDOM AND HOW WE SECURED IT

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'Every morning Sir Christopher sat in his Justice's chair, under the helmets and coats of armour.'

For Faith and Freedom

BY

WALTER BESANT

AUTHOR OF 'DOROTHY FORSTER' 'CHILDREN OF GIBEON'
'ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY A. FORESTIER AND F. WADDY

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FOR FAITH AND FREEDOM.

CHAPTER I.

FAREWELL SUNDAY.

THE morning of Sunday, August 23, in the year of grace 1662, should have been black and gloomy with the artillery of rolling thunder, dreadful flashes of lightning, and driving hail and wind to strip the orchards and lay low the corn. For on that day was done a thing which filled the whole country with grief, and bore bitter fruit, in after years, of revenge and rebellion ; and, because it was the day before that formerly named after Bartholomew, the disciple, it hath been called the Black Bartholomew of England, thus being likened unto that famous day (approved by the Pope) when the French Protestants were

treacherously massacred by their King. It should rather be called 'Farewell Sunday' or 'Exile Sunday,' for on that day two thousand godly ministers preached their last sermon in the churches where they had laboured worthily and with good fruit, some during the time of the Protector, and some even longer, because among them were a few who possessed their benefices even from the time of the late King Charles the First. And, since on that day two thousand ministers left their churches and their houses, and laid down their worldly wealth for conscience' sake, there were also, perhaps, as many wives who went with them, and, I dare say, three or four times as many innocent and helpless babes. And, further (it is said that the time was fixed by design and deliberate malice of our enemies), the ministers were called upon to make their choice only a week or two before the day of the collection of their tithes. In other words, they were sent forth to the world at the season when their purses were at the leanest; indeed, with most country

clergymen, their purses shortly before the collection of tithes have become wellnigh empty. It was also unjust that their successors should be permitted to collect the tithes due to those who were ejected.

It is fitting to begin this history with the Black Bartholomew, because all the troubles and adventures which afterwards befell us were surely caused by that accursed day. One knows not, certainly, what other rubs might have been ordained for us by a wise Providence (always with the merciful design of keeping before our eyes the vanity of worldly things, the instability of fortune, the uncertainty of life, and the wisdom of looking for a hereafter which shall be lasting, stable, and satisfying to the soul). Still, it must be confessed, such trials as were appointed unto us were, in severity and continuance, far beyond those appointed to the ordinary sort, so that I cannot but feel at times uplifted (I hope not sinfully) at having been called upon to endure so much. Let me not, however, be proud. Had it not been

for this day, for certain our boys would not have been tempted to strike a blow—vain and useless as it proved—for the Protestant religion and for liberty of conscience: while perhaps I should now be forbidden to relate our sufferings, were it not for the glorious Revolution which has restored toleration, secured the Protestant ascendancy, and driven into banishment a Prince, concerning whom all honest men pray that he and his son (if he have, indeed, a son of his own) may never again have authority over this realm.

This Sunday, I say, should have wept tears of rain over the havoc which it witnessed; yet it was fine and clear, the sun riding in splendour, and a warm summer air blowing among the orchards and over the hills and around the village of Bradford Orcas, in the shire of Somerset. The wheat (for the season was late) stood gold-coloured in the fields, ready at last for the reaper; the light breeze bent down the ears so that they showed like waves over which the passing clouds make

light and shade ; the apples in the orchards were red and yellow, and nearly ripe for the press ; in the gardens of the Manor House, hard by the church, the sun-flowers and the holly-hocks were at their tallest and their best ; the yellow roses on the wall were still in clusters ; the sweet-peas hung with tangles of vine and flower upon their stalks ; the bachelors' buttons, the sweet mignonette, the nasturtium, the gilly-flowers and stocks, the sweet-williams and the pansies, offered their late summer blossoms to the hot sun among the lavender, thyme, parsley, sage, feverfew, and vervain of my Lady's garden. Oh! I know how it all looked, though I was then as yet unborn. How many times have I stood in the church-yard and watched the same scene at the same sweet season! On a week-day one hears the thumping and the groaning of the mill below the church ; there are the voices of the men at work—the yo-hoing of the boys who drive ; and the lumbering of the carts. You can even hear the spinning-wheels at work in the cottages. On Sunday morning everything is

still, save for the warbling of the winged tribe in the wood, the cooing of the doves in the cote, the clucking of the hens, the grunting of the pigs, and the droning of the bees. These things disturb not the meditations of one who is accustomed to them.

At eight o'clock in the morning, the Sexton, an ancient man and rheumatic, hobbled slowly through the village, key in hand, and opened the church-door. Then he went into the tower and rang the first bell. I suppose this bell is designed to hurry housewives with their morning work, and to admonish the men that they incline their hearts to a spiritual disposition. This done, the Sexton set open the doors of the pews, swept out the Squire's and the Rector's in the chancel, dusted the cushions of the pulpit (the reading-desk at this time was not used), opened the clasps of the great Bible, and swept down the aisle : as he had done Sunday after Sunday for fifty years. When he had thus made the church ready for the day's service, he went into the vestry, which had only been used since the

establishment of the Commonwealth for the registers of birth, death, and marriage.

At one side of the vestry stood an ancient, black oak coffer, the sides curiously graven, and a great rusty key in the lock. The Sexton turned the key with difficulty, threw open the lid and looked in.

'Ay,' he said, chuckling, 'the old surplice and the old Book of Common Prayer. Ye have had a long rest; 'tis time for both to come out again. When the surplice is out, the book will stay no longer locked up. These two go in and out together. I mind me, now'—— Here he sat down, and his thoughts wandered for a space; perhaps he saw himself once more a boy running in the fields, or a young man courting a maid. Presently he returned to the task before him, and drew forth an old and yellow roll which he shook out. It was the surplice which had once been white. 'Here you be,' he said. 'Put you away for a matter of twelve year and more and you bide your time; you know you will come back again; you are not

in any hurry. Even the Sexton dies ; but you die not, you bide your time. Everything comes again. The old woman shall give you a taste o' the suds and the hot iron. Thus we go up and thus we go down.' He put back the surplice and took out the great Book of Common Prayer—musty and damp after twelve years' imprisonment. 'Fie!' he said, 'thy leather is parting from the boards, and thy leaves they do stick together. Shalt have a pot of paste, and then lie in the sun before thou goest back to the desk. Whether 'tis Mass or Common Prayer, whether 'tis Independent or Presbyterian, folk mun still die and be buried—ay, and married and born—whatever they do say. Parson goes and Preacher comes; Preacher goes and Parson comes; but Sexton stays '—— He chuckled again, put back the surplice and the book, and locked the coffer.

Then he slowly went down the church and came out of the porch, blinking in the sun, and shading his old eyes. He sat down upon the flat stones of the old cross, and pre-

sently nodded his head and dropped off asleep. This was a strange indifference in the man. A great and truly notable thing was to be accomplished that day. But he cared nothing. Two thousand godly and learned men were to go forth into poverty for liberty of conscience—this man's own minister was one of them. He cared nothing. The King was sowing the seed from which should spring a rod to drive forth his successor from the kingdom. In the village the common sort were not moved. Nothing concerns the village folk but the weather and the market prices. As for the good Sexton, he was very old: he had seen the Church of England displaced by the Presbyterians and the Presbyterians by the Independents, and now these were again to be supplanted by the Church of England. He had been Sexton through all these changes. He heeded them not; why, his father, Sexton before him, could remember when the Mass was said in the church, and the Virgin was worshipped, and the folk were driven like sheep to con-

fession. All the time the people went on being born, and marrying, and dying. Creed doth not, truly, affect these things, nor the Sexton's work. Therefore, this old gaffer, having made sure that the surplice was in the place where it had lain undisturbed for a dozen years, and remembering that it must be washed and ironed for the following Sunday, sat down to bask in the sun, his mind at rest, and dropped off into a gentle sleep.

At ten o'clock the bell-ringers came tramping up the stone steps from the road, and the Sexton woke up. At ten they used to begin their chimes, but at the hour they ring for five minutes only, ending with the clash of all five bells together. At a quarter past ten they chime again, for the service, which begins at half-past ten.

At the sound of these chimes the whole village begins to move slowly towards the church. First come the children, the bigger ones leading those who are little by the hand; the boys come next, but unwillingly, because the Sexton is diligent with his cane, and some

of those who now go up the steps to the church will come down with smarting backs, the reward of those who play or laugh during the service. Then come the young men, who stand about the churchyard and whisper to each other. After them follow the elders and the married men, with the women and the girls. Five minutes before the half hour the ringers change the chime for a single bell. Then those who are outside gather in the porch and wait for the Quality.

When the single bell began, there came forth from the Rectory the Rector himself, Mr. Comfort Eykin, Doctor of Divinity, who was this day to deliver his soul and lay down his charge. He wore the black gown and Geneva bands, for the use of which he contended. At this time he was a young man of thirty—tall and thin. He stooped in the shoulders because he was continually reading; his face was grave and austere; his nose thin and aquiline; his eyes bright—never was any man with brighter eyes than my father; his hair, which he wore long, was brown and

curly ; his forehead high, rather than broad ; his lips were firm. In these days, as my mother hath told me, and as I well believe, he was a man of singular comeliness, concerning which he cared nothing. Always from childhood upwards he had been grave in conversation and seriously inclined in mind. If I think of my father as a boy (no one ever seems to think that his father was once a boy), I am fain to compare him with Humphrey, save for certain bodily defects, my father having been like a Priest of the Altar for bodily perfection. That is to say, I am sure that, like Humphrey, he had no need of rod or ferule to make him learn his lessons, and, like that dear and fond friend of my childhood, he would willingly sit in a corner and read a book while the other boys played and went a-hunting or a-nesting. And very early in life he was smitten with the conviction of sin, and blessed with such an inward assurance of salvation as made him afterwards steadfast in all afflictions.

He was not a native of this country,

having been born in New England. He came over, being then eighteen years of age, to study at Oxford, that university being purged of malignants (as they were then called), and, at the time, entirely in the hands of the godly. He was entered of Balliol College, of which Society he became a Fellow, and was greatly esteemed for his learning, wherein he excelled most of the scholars of his time. He knew and could read Hebrew, Chaldee, and the ancient Syriac, as well as Latin and Greek. Of modern languages he had acquired Arabic, by the help of which he read the book which is called the Koran of the False Prophet Mohammed: French and Italian he also knew and could read easily. As for his opinions, he was an Independent, and that not meekly or with hesitation, but with such zeal and vehemence that he considered all who differed from him as his private enemies—nay, the very enemies of God. For this reason, and because his personal habits were too austere for those who attained not to his spiritual height, he was more feared than loved. Yet

his party looked upon him as one of their greatest and stoutest champions.

He left Oxford at the age of five or six and twenty, and accepted the living of Bradford Orcas, offered him by Sir Christopher Challis of that place. Here he had preached for six years, looking forward to nothing else than to remain there, advancing in grace and wisdom, until the end of his days. So much was ordered, indeed, for him; but not quite as he had designed. Let no man say that he knoweth the future, or that he can shape out his destiny. You shall hear presently how Benjamin arrogantly resolved that his future should be what he chose; and what came of that impious resolution.

My father's face was always austere; this morning it was more serious and sterner than customary, because the day was to him the most important in his life, and he was about to pass from a condition of plenty (the Rectory of Bradford Orcas is not rich, but it affords a sufficiency) to one of penury. Those who knew him, however, had no doubt of the

course he was about to take. Even the rustics knew that their minister would never consent to wear a surplice or to read the Book of Common Prayer, or to keep holy days—you have seen how the Sexton opened the box and took out the surplice ; yet my father had said nothing to him concerning his intentions.

In his hand he carried his Bible—his own copy, I have it still, the margins covered with notes in his writing—bound in black leather, worn by constant handling, with brass clasps. Upon his head he had a plain black silk cap, which he wore constantly in his study and at meals to keep off draughts. Indeed, I loved to see him with the silk cap rather than with his tall steeple hat, with neither ribbon nor ornament of any kind, in which he rode when he afterwards went about the country to break the law in exhorting and praying with his friends.

Beside him walked my mother, holding in her hand her boy, my brother Barnaby, then three years of age. As for me, I was not yet born. She had been weeping ; her eyes were

red and swollen with tears ; but when she entered the church she wept no more, bravely listening to the words which condemned to poverty and hardship herself and her children, if any more should be born to her. Alas, poor soul! What had she done that this affliction should befall her? What had her innocent boy done? For upon her—not upon her husband—would fall the heavy burden of poverty, and on her children the loss. Yet never by a single word of complaint did she make her husband sorry that he had obeyed the voice of conscience, even when there was nothing left in the house, not so much as the widow's cruse of oil. Alas, poor mother, once so free from care! what sorrow and anxiety wert thou destined to endure for the tender conscience of thy husband!

At the same time—namely, at the ringing of the single bell—there came forth from the Manor House hard by the church, his Honour, Sir Christopher, with his family. The worthy knight was then about fifty years of age, tall and handsome still—in his later years there

was something of a heavenly sweetness in his face, created, I doubt not, by a long life of pious thoughts and worthy deeds. His hair was streaked with grey, but not yet white ; he wore a beard of the kind called stiletto, which was even then an ancient fashion, and he was dressed more soberly than is common with gentlemen of his rank, having no feather in his hat, but a simple ribbon round it, and though his ruffles were of lace and the kerchief round his neck was lace, the colour of his coat was plain brown. He leaned upon a gold-headed cane on account of an old wound (it was inflicted by a Cavalier's musket-ball when he was a Captain in the army of Lord Essex). The wound left him somewhat lame, yet not so lame but that he could very well walk about his fields and could ride his horse, and even hunt with the otter-hounds. By his side walked Madam, his wife. After him came his son, Humphrey, newly married, and with Humphrey his wife ; and last came his son-in-law, the Reverend Philip Boscorel, M.A., late Fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford,

also newly married, with his wife, Sir Christopher's daughter, Patience. Mr. Boscorel, like my father, was at that time thirty years of age. Like him, too, his face was comely and his features fine; yet they lacked the fire and the earnestness which marked my father. And in his silken cassock, his small white bands, his lace ruffles, and his dainty walk, it seemed as if Mr. Boscorel thought himself above the common run of mankind and of superior clay. 'Tis sometimes the way with scholars and those who survey the world from the eminence of a library.

Sir Christopher's face was full of concern, because he loved the young man who was this day to throw away his livelihood; and although he was ready himself to worship after the manner prescribed by law, his opinions were rather Independent than Episcopalian. As for Mr. Boscorel, who was about to succeed to the ejected minister, his face wore no look of triumph, which would have been ungenerous. He was observed, indeed, after he had silently gone through the

Service of the day with the help of the Common Prayer-book, to listen diligently unto the preacher.

The people, I have already said, knew already what was about to happen. Perhaps some of them (but I think not) possessed a copy of the old Prayer-book. This, they knew, was to be restored, with the surplice, and the observance of Holy days, Feasts, and Fasts, and the kneeling at the administration of the Holy Communion. Our people are craftsmen as much as they are rustics; every week the master clothiers' men drive their packhorses into the village laden with wool, and return with yarn; they are not, therefore, so brutish and sluggish as most country folk; yet they made no outward show of caring whether Prelacy or Independency was to have the sway. Perhaps the abstruse doctrines which my father loved to discuss were too high for them; perhaps his austerity was too strict for them, so that he was not beloved by them. Perhaps, even, they would have cared little if they had heard that Bishop Bonner himself

was coming back. Religion, to country folk, means, mostly, the going to church on Sunday morning. That done, man's service of Prayer and Praise to his Creator is also done. If the form be changed the church remains, and the churchyard ; one shepherd followeth another, but the flock is always the same. Revolutions overthrow kings, and send great heads to the block ; but the village heedeth not unless civil war pass that way. To country folk, what difference ? The sky and the fields are unchanged. Under Queen Mary they are Papists ; under Queen Elizabeth they are Protestants. They have the Prayer Book under King James and King Charles ; under Oliver they have had the Presbyterian and Independent ; now they have the Book of Common Prayer and the surplice again. Yet they remain the same people, and tell the same stories, and, so far as I know, believe the same things—viz., that Christ Jesus saves the soul of every man who truly believes in Him. Why, if it were not for his immortal soul—concerning which he takes but little thought—

the rustic might be likened unto the patient beast whom he harnesseth to his plough and to his muck-cart. He changeth no more; he works as hard; he is as long-enduring; his eyes and his thoughts are as much bound by the hedge, the lane, and the field; he thinks and invents and advances no more. Were it not, I say, for the Church, he would take as little heed of anything as his ox or his ass; his village would become his country; his squire would become his king; the nearest village would become the camp of an enemy; and he would fall into the condition of the Ancient Briton when Julius Cæsar found every tribe fighting against every other.

I talk as a fool. For sometimes there falls upon the torpid soul of the rustic a spark which causes a mighty flame to blaze up and burn fiercely within him. I have read how a simple monk, called Peter the Hermit, drew thousands of poor, illiterate, credulous persons from their homes, and led them, a mob armed with scythes and pikes, across Europe to the deserts of Asia Minor, where they miserably

perished. I have read also of Jack Cade, and how he drew the multitudes after him, crying aloud for justice or death. And I myself have seen these sluggish spirits suddenly fired with a spirit which nothing could subdue. The sleeping soul I have seen suddenly starting into life; strength and swiftness have I seen suddenly put into sluggish limbs; light and fire have I seen gleaming suddenly in dull and heavy eyes. Oh! it was a miracle: but I have seen it. And having seen it, I cannot despise these lads of the plough, these honest boys of Somerset, nor can I endure to hear them laughed at or contemned.

Bradford Orcas, in the Hundred of Horethorne, Somerset, is a village so far from the great towns, that one would think a minister might have gone on praying and preaching after his own fashion without ever being discovered. But the arm of the Law is long.

The nearest town is Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, to which there is a bridle-path across

the fields : it is the market-town for the villages round it. Bradford Oreas is an obscure little village, with no history and no antiquities. It stands in the south-eastern corner of the county, close to the western declivity of the Corton Hills, which here sweep round so as to form a valley, in which the village is built along the banks of a stream. The houses are for the most part of stone, with thatched roofs, as is the custom in our country ; the slopes of the hills are covered with trees, and round the village stand goodly orchards, the cider from which cannot be surpassed. As for the land, but little of it is arable ; the greater part is a sandy loam or stone brash. The church, which in the superstitious days was dedicated to St. Nicolas, is built upon a hillock, a rising ground in the west of the village. This building of churches upon hillocks is a common custom in our parts, and seemeth laudable, because a church should stand where it can be seen by all the people, and by its presence remind them of Death and of the Judgment. The practice

doth obtain, for example, at Sherborne, where there is a very noble church, and at Huish Episcopi, and at many other places in our county. Our church is fair and commodious, not too large for the congregation, having in the west a stone tower embattled, and consisting of a nave and chancel with a very fine roof of carved woodwork. There is an ancient yew-tree in the churchyard, from which in old times bows were cut; some of the bows yet hang in the great hall of the Manor House. Among the graves is an ancient stone cross, put up no man knows when, standing in a six-sided slab of stone, but the top was broken off at the time of the Reformation; two or three tombs are in the churchyard, and the rest is covered with mounds, beneath which lie the bones and dust of former generations.

Close to the churchyard, and at the north-east corner, is the Manor House, as large as the church itself, but not so ancient. It was built in the reign of Henry VII. A broad arched gateway leads into a court, wherein is

the entrance to the house. Over the gateway is a kind of tower, but not detached from the house. In the wall of the tower is a panel, lozenge-shaped, in which are carved the arms of the Challis family. The house is stately, with many gables, and in each are casement windows set in richly-carved stone tracery. As for the rooms within the house, I will speak of them hereafter. At present I have the churchyard in my mind. There is no place upon the earth which more I love. To stand in the long grass among the graves ; to gaze upon the wooded hills beyond, the orchards, the meadows, the old house, the venerable church, the yew-tree ; to listen to the murmur of the stream below and the singing of the lark above ; to feel the fresh breeze upon my cheek—oh! I do this daily. It makes me feel young once more ; it brings back the days when I stood here with the boys, and when Sir Christopher would lean over the wall and discourse with us gravely and sweetly upon the love of God and the fleeting joys of earth (which yet, he said, we

should accept and be happy withal in thankfulness), and the happiness unspeakable that awaiteth the Lord's Saints. Or, if my thoughts continue in the past, the graveyard brings back the presence and the voice of Mr. Boscorel.

'In such a spot as this,' he would say, speaking softly and slowly, 'the pastorals of Virgil or Theocritus might have been written. Here would the shepherds hold their contests. Certainly they could find no place, even in sunny Sicily or at Mantua itself, where (save for three months in the year) the air is more delightful. Here they need not to avoid the burning heat of a sun which gently warms, but never burns; here they would find the shade of the grove pleasant in the soft summer season. Innocent lambs instead of kids (which are tasteless) play in our meadows; the cider which we drink is, I take it, more pleasing to the palate than was their wine flavoured with turpentine. And our viols, violins, and spinets are instruments more delightful than the oaten pipe, or the cithara itself.' Then

would he wave his hand, and quote some poet in praise of a country life—

> "There is no man but may make his paradise,
> And it is nothing but his love and dotage
> Upon the world's foul joys that keeps him out on 't.
> For he that lives retired in mind and spirit
> Is still in Paradise."

'But, child,' he would add, with a sigh, 'one may not always wish to be in Paradise. The world's joys lie elsewhere. Only, when youth is gone—then Paradise is best.'

The service began, after the manner of the Independents, with a long prayer, during which the people sat. Mr. Boscorel, as I have said, went through his own service in silence, the Book of Common Prayer in his hand. After the prayer, the minister read a portion of Scripture, which he expounded at length and with great learning. Then the congregation sang that Psalm which begins—

> Triumphing songs with glorious tongues
> Let's offer unto Him.

This done, the Rector ascended the pulpit

for the last time, gave out his text, turned his hour-glass, and began his sermon.

He took for his text those verses in St. Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians, vi., 3–10, in which the Apostle speaks of his own ministry as if he was actually predicting the tribulation which was to fall upon these faithful preachers of a later time—'In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings,' —could not the very words be applied to my father?

He read the text three times, so that everybody might fully understand the subject upon which he was to preach—namely, the faithfulness required of a minister of the gospel. I need not set down the arguments he used or the reasons he gave for his resolution not to conform with the Act of Uniformity. The rustics sat patiently listening, with no outward sign of assent or of sympathy. But their conduct afterwards proved abundantly to which side their minds inclined.

It behoves us all to listen with respect when scholars and wise men inquire into the reasons of things. Yet the preachings and expositions which such as my father bestowed upon their flocks did certainly awaken men's minds to consider by themselves the things which many think too high for them. It is a habit which may lead to the foundation of false and pernicious sects. And it certainly is not good that men should preach the doctrines of the Anabaptists, the Fifth Monarchy men, or the Quakers. Yet it is better that some should be deceived than that all should be slaves. I have been assured by one—I mean Humphrey—who hath travelled, that in those countries where the priest taketh upon himself the religion of the people, so that they think to be saved by attending mass, by fasting, confession, penance, and so forth, not only does religion itself become formal, mechanical, and inanimate, but in the very daily concerns and business of life men grow slothful and lack spirit. Their religion, which is the very heat of the body, the sustaining

and vital force of all man's actions, is cold and dead. Therefore, all the virtues are cold also, and with them the courage and the spirit of the people. Thus it is that Italy hath fallen aside into so many small and divided kingdoms. And for this reason, Spain, in the opinion of those who know her best, is now falling rapidly into decay.

I am well assured, by those who can remember, that the intelligence of the village-folk greatly increased during the period when they were encouraged to search the Scriptures for themselves. Many taught themselves to read, others had their children taught, in order that they might read or hear, daily, portions of the Scriptures. It is now thirty years since Authority resumed the rule; the village folk have again become, to outward seeming, sheep who obey without questioning. Yet it is observed that when they are within reach of a town—that is to say, of a meeting-house—they willingly flock to the service in the afternoon and evening.

It was with the following brave words that my father concluded his discourse:—

'Seeing, therefore, my brethren, how clear is the Word of God on these points; and considering that we must always obey God rather than man; and observing that here we plainly see the finger of God pointing to disobedience and its consequences, I am constrained to disobey. The consequence will be to me that I shall stand in this place no more: to you, that you will have a stranger in your church. I pray that he may be a godly person, able to divide the Word, learned and acceptable.

'As for me, I must go forth, perhaps from among you altogether. If persecutions arise, it may behove me and mine to seek again that land beyond the seas whither my fathers fled for the sake of religious liberty. Whatever happens, I must fain preach the gospel. It is laid upon me to preach. If I am silent, it will be as if Death itself had fallen upon me. My brethren, there have been times—and those times may return—when the Elect have

had to meet, secretly, on the sides of barren hills and in the heart of the forest, to pray together and to hear the Word. I say that these times may return. If they do, you will find me willing, I hope and pray, to brave for you the worst that our enemies can devise. Perhaps, however, this tyranny may pass over. Already the Lord hath achieved one great deliverance for this ancient Realm. Perhaps another may be in His secret purposes when we have been chastened, as, for our many sins, we richly deserve. Whether in affliction or in prosperity, let us always say, "The Lord's name be praised!"

'Now, therefore, for the sand is running low and I may not weary the young and the impatient, let me conclude. Farewell, sweet Sabbaths! Farewell, the sweet expounding of the Word! Farewell, sweet pulpit! Farewell, sweet faces of the souls which I have yearned to present pure and washed clean before the Throne! My brethren, I go about, henceforth, as a dog which is muzzled; another man will fill this pulpit; our simple

form of worship is gone; the Prayer-book and the surplice have come back again. Pray God we see not Confession, Penance, the Mass, the Inquisition, the enslavement of conscience, the stake, and the martyr's axe!'

Then he paused and bowed his head, and everybody thought that he had finished.

He had not. He raised it again, and threw out his arms and shouted aloud, while his eyes glowed like fire:

'*No!* I will not be silent. I WILL NOT. I am sent into the world to preach the gospel. I have no other business. I must proclaim the Word as I hope for everlasting life. Brethren, we shall meet again. In the woods and on the hills we shall find a Temple; there are houses where two or three may be gathered together, the Lord Himself being in their midst. Never doubt that I am ready, in season and out of season, whatever be the law, to preach the gospel of the Lord!'

He ended, and straightway descended the pulpit stair, and stalked out of the church, the people looking after him with awe and wonder. But Mr. Boscorel smiled and wagged his head, with a kind of pity.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE VILLAGE.

HUS did my father, by his own act and deed, strip himself of all his worldly wealth. Yet, having nothing, he ceased not to put his trust in the Lord, and continued to sit among his books, never asking whence came the food provided for him. I think, indeed, so wrapt was he in thought, that he knew not. As for procuring the daily food, my mother it was who found out the way.

Those who live in other parts of this kingdom do not know what a busy and populous county is that of Somerset. Apart

from the shipping and the great trade with Ireland, Spain, and the West Indies carried on from the Port of Bristol, we have our great manufactures of cloth, in which we are surpassed by no country in the world. The town of Taunton alone can boast of eleven hundred looms always at work making Sagathies and Des Roys; there are many looms at Bristol, where they make for the most part Druggets and Cantaloons; and there are great numbers at that rich and populous town of Frome Selwood, where they manufacture the Spanish Medleys. Besides the cloth-workers, we have, in addition, our knitted-stocking trade, which is carried on mostly at Glastonbury and Shepton Mallet. Not only does this flourishing trade make the masters rich and prosperous (it is not uncommon to find a master with his twenty—ay, and his forty—thousand pounds), but it fills all the country with work, so that the towns are frequent, populous, and full of everything that men can want; and the very villages are not like those which may be seen

in other parts, poor and squalid, but well-built and comfortable.

Every cottage has its spinning-wheel. The mother, when she is not doing the work of the house, sits at the wheel; the girls, when they have nothing else to do, are made to knit stockings. Every week the master-clothier sends round his men among the villages, their pack-horses laden with wool; every week they return, their packs laden with yarn, ready for the loom.

There is no part of England where the people are more prosperous and more contented. Nowhere are there more towns, and all thriving; nowhere are the villages better built; nor can one find anywhere else more beautiful churches. Because the people make good wages they are independent in their manners; they have learned things supposed to be above the station of the humble; most of them in the towns, and many in the villages, are able to read. This enables them to search the Scriptures, and examine into doctrine by the light of their own reason,

guided by grace. And to me, the daughter of a Nonconforming preacher, it does not seem wonderful that so many of them should have become stiff and sturdy Nonconformists. This was seen in the year 1685, and, again, three years later, when a greater than Monmouth landed on the western shores.

My mother, then, seeing no hope that her husband would earn, by any work of his own, the daily bread of the household, bravely followed the example of the women in the village. That is to say, she set up her spinning-wheel, and spent all the time that she could spare spinning the wool into yarn ; while she taught her little boy first and afterwards her daughter—as soon as I was old enough to manage the needles—to knit stockings. What trade, indeed, could her husband follow save one—and that, by law, prohibited? He could not dig ; he could not make anything ; he knew not how to buy or sell ; he could only study, write, and preach. Therefore, while he sat among his books in one room, she sat over her wheel in the other,

working for the master-clothiers of Frome Selwood. It still makes my heart to swell with pity and with love when I think upon my mother, thus spending herself and being spent, working all day, huckstering with the rough pack-horsemen more accustomed to exchange rude jests with the rustics than to talk with gentlewomen. And this she continued to do year after year, cheerful and contented, so that her husband should never feel the pinch of poverty. Love makes us willing slaves.

My father, happily, was not a man whose mind was troubled about food. He paid no heed at all to what he ate, provided that it was sufficient for his needs ; he would sup his broth of pork and turnips and bread, after thanks rendered, as if it were the finest dish in the world ; and a piece of cold bacon with a hot cabbage would be a feast for him. The cider which he drank was brewed by my mother from her own apples ; to him it was as good as if it had been Sherris or Rhenish. I say that he did not even know how his food

was provided for him ; his mind was at all times occupied with subjects so lofty that he knew not what was done under his very eyes. The hand of God, he said, doth still support His faithful. Doubtless we cannot look back upon those years without owning that we were so supported. But my mother was the Instrument ; nay, my father sometimes even compared himself with satisfaction unto the Prophet Elijah, whom the ravens fed beside the Brook Cherith, bringing him flesh and bread in the morning and flesh and bread in the evening. I suppose my father thought that his bacon and beans came to him in the same manner.

Yet we should sometimes have fared but poorly had it not been for the charity of our friends. Many a fat capon, green goose, side of bacon, and young grunter came to us from the Manor House, with tobacco, which my father loved, and wine to comfort his soul ; yea, and clothes for us all, else had we gone barefoot and in rags. In this way was many an ejected Elijah at that time nourished and

supported. Fresh meat we should never have tasted, any more than the humblest around us, had it not been for our good friends at the Manor House. Those who live in towns cannot understand how frugal and yet sufficient may be the fare of those who live in the country and have gardens and orchards. Cider was our drink, which we made ourselves ; we had some sweet apple-trees, which gave us a stock of russets and pippins for winter use ; we had bees (but we sold most of our honey at Sherborne market) ; our garden grew sallets and onions, beans and the like ; skim milk we could have from the Manor House for the fetching ; for breakfast we had bread and milk, for dinner bread and soft cheese, with a lettuce or an apple ; and bread or bread and butter for supper. For my father there was always kept a piece of bacon or fat pork.

Our house was one of the cottages in the village : it is a stone house (often I sit down to look at it, and to remember those days of humility) with a thick thatch. It had two

rooms below and two garrets above. One room was made into a study or library for my father, where also he slept upon a pallet. The other was kitchen, spinning-room, parlour, all in one. The door opened upon the garden, and the floor was of stone, so that it was cold. But when Barnaby began to find the use of his hands he procured some boards, which he laid upon the stones, and so we had a wooden floor; and in winter across the door we hung a blanket or rug to keep off the wind.

The walls were whitewashed, and over all my mother had written texts of Scripture with charcoal, so that godly admonition was ever present to our eyes and minds. She also embroidered short texts upon our garments, and I have still the cradle in which I was laid, carved (but I do not know by whose hand) with a verse from the Word of God. My father used himself, and would have us employ, the words of the Bible even for the smaller occasions of daily use; nor would he allow that anything was lawful unless it was

sanctioned by the Bible, holding that in the Word was everything necessary or lawful. Did Barnaby go shooting with Sir Christopher and bring home a rabbit? Lo! David bade the children of Israel teach the use of the bow. Did my mother instruct and amuse me with riddles?—She had the warrant of Scripture for it in the example of Samson. Did she sing Psalms and spiritual songs to while away the time and make her work less irksome and please her little daughter?—In the congregation of Nehemiah there were two hundred forty-and-five singing men and singing women.

My father read and expounded the Bible to us twice a day—morning and evening. Besides the Bible we had few books which we could read. As for my mother, poor soul, she had no time to read. And as for me, when I grew older I borrowed books from the Manor House or Mr. Boscorel. And there were 'Old Mr. Dod's Sayings' and 'Plain Directions by Joseph Large' always on the shelf beside the Bible.

Now, while my father worked in his study and my brother Barnaby either sat over his lesson-book, his hands rammed into his hair, as if determined to lose nothing, not the least scrap of his portion (yet knowing full well that on the morrow there would be not a word left in his poor unlucky noddle, and once more the whip), my mother would sit at her wheel earning the daily bread. And, when I was little, she would tell me, speaking very softly, so as not to disturb the wrestling of her husband with a knotty argument, all the things which you have heard—how my father chose rather poverty than to worship at the altar of Baal; and how two thousand pious ministers, like-minded with himself, left their pulpits and went out into the cold for conscience' sake. So that I was easily led to think that there were no Christian martyrs and confessors more excellent and praise-worthy than these ejected ministers (which still I believe). Then would she tell me further of how they fared, and how the common people do still reverence them.

There was the history of John Norman, of Bridgwater; Joseph Chadwick, of Wrenford; Felix Howe, of West Torrington, George Minton, and many others. She also instructed me very early in the history of the Protestant uprising over the best half of Europe, and showed me how, against fearful odds, and after burnings and tortures unspeakable, the good people of Germany, the Netherlands, and Great Britain won their freedom from the Pope, so that my heart glowed within me to think of the great goodness and mercy which caused me to be born in a Protestant country. And she instructed me, later, in the wickedness of King Charles, whom they now call a martyr, and in the plots of that King, and Laud his Archbishop, and how King and Archbishop were both overthrown and perished when the people arose and would bear no more. In fine, my mother made me, from the beginning, a Puritan. As I remember my mother always, she was pale of cheek and thin, her voice was gentle; yet with her very gentleness she

would make the blood to run quick in the veins, and the heart to beat.

How have I seen the boys spring to their feet when she has talked with them of the great civil war and the Revolution! But always soft and gentle; her blue eyes never flashing; no wrath in her heart; but the truth, which often causeth righteous anger, always upon her tongue.

One day, I remember, when I was a little girl playing in the garden, Mr. Boscorel walked down the village in his great silken gown, which seemed always new, his lace ruffs, and his white bands, looking like a Bishop at least, and walking delicately, holding up his gown to keep it from the dust and mud. When he spoke it was in a soft voice and a mincing speech, not like our plain Somersetshire way. He stopped at our gate, and looked down the garden. It was a summer day, the doors and windows of the cottage were open; at our window sat my father bending over his books, in his rusty

gown and black cap, thin and lank; at the door sat my mother at her wheel.

'Child,' said the Rector, 'take heed thou never forget in thine age the thing which thou seest daily in thy childhood.'

I knew not what he meant.

'Read and mark,' he said; 'yea, little Alice, learn by heart what the Wise Man hath said of the good woman: "She layeth her hands to the spindle . . . she maketh fine linen and selleth it . . . she eateth not the bread of idleness. . . . Let her works praise her in the gates."'

CHAPTER III.

THE BOYS.

THE family of Challis, of Bradford Orcas, is well known; here there has always been a Challis from time immemorial. They are said to have been on the land before the time of the Conqueror. But because they have never been a great family, like the Mohuns of Dunster, but only modest gentle-folk with some four or five hundred pounds a year, they have not suffered, like those great houses, from the civil wars, which, when they raged in the land, brought in their train so many attainders, sequestrations, beheadings, imprisonments, and fines. Whether the Barons fought, or whether Cavaliers and Roundheads, the Challises remained at Bradford Orcas.

Since the land is theirs and the village, it is reasonable that they should have done everything that has been done for the place. One of them built the church, but I know not when ; another built the tower ; another gave the peal of bells. He who reigned here in the time of Henry VII. built the Manor House ; another built the mill ; the monuments in the church are all put up to the memory of Challises dead and gone ; there is one, a very stately tomb, which figures, to the life, Sir William Challis (who died in the time of Queen Elizabeth), carved in marble, and coloured, kneeling at a desk ; opposite to him is his second wife, Grace, also kneeling. Behind the husband are three boys, on their knees, and behind the wife are three girls. Apart from this group is the effigy of Filipa, Sir Christopher's first wife, with four daughters kneeling behind her. I was always sorry for Filipa, thus separated and cut off from the society of her husband. There are brasses on the floor with figures of other Challises, and tablets in the wall, and the Challis' coat-

of-arms is everywhere, cut in lozenges, and painted in wood, and shining in the east window. It seemed to me, in my young days, that it was the grandest thing in the world to be a Challis.

In this family there was a laudable practice with the younger sons, that they stayed not at home, as is too often their custom, leading indolent lives without ambition or fortune, but they sallied forth and sought fortune in trade, or in the Law, or in the Church, or in foreign service—wherever fortune is to be honourably won—so that, though I daresay some have proved dead and dry branches, others have put forth flowers and fruit abundantly, forming new and vigorous trees sprung from the ancient root. Thus, some have become judges: and some bishops: and some great merchants: some have crossed the ocean and are now settled in the Plantations: some have attained rank and estates in the service of the Low Countries. Thus, Sir Christopher's brother Humphrey went to London and became a Levant merchant and adventurer,

rising to great honour and becoming Alderman. I doubt not that he would have been made Lord Mayor but for his untimely death. And as for his wealth, which was rumoured to be so great—but you shall hear of this in due time.

That goodly following of his household which you have seen enter the church on Farewell Sunday, was shortly afterwards broken into by death. There fell upon the village (I think it was in the year 1665) the scourge of a putrid fever, of which there died, besides numbers of the village folk, Madam herself—the honoured wife of Sir Christopher—Humphrey his son, and Madam Patience Boscorel, his daughter. There were left to Sir Christopher, therefore, only his daughter-in-law and his grandsons Robin and Benjamin. And in that year his household was increased by the arrival of his grand-nephew Humphrey. This child was the grandson of Sir Christopher's brother, the Turkey or Levant merchant of whom I have spoken. He was rich and prosperous: his ships sailed out every year laden with I know not what, and returned with figs,

dates, spices, gums, silks, and all kinds of precious commodities from Eastern parts. It is, I have been told, a profitable trade, but subject to terrible dangers from Moorish pirates, who must be bravely fought and beaten off, otherwise ship and cargo will be taken, and captain and crew driven into slavery. Mr. Challis dwelt in Thames-street, close to Tower-hill. It is said that he lived here in great splendour, as befits a rich merchant who is also an Alderman.

Now, in the year 1665, as is very well known, a great plague broke out in the city. There were living in the house in Thames-street the Alderman, his wife, his son, his son's wife, a daughter, and his grandson, little Humphrey. On the first outbreak of the pestilence they took counsel together and resolved that the child should be first sent away to be out of danger, and that they would follow if the plague spread.

This was done, and a sober man, one of their porters or warehousemen, carried the child with his nurse all the way from London

to Bradford Orcas. Alas! Before the boy reached his great-uncle, the house in Thames-street was attacked by the plague, and every-one therein perished. Thus was poor little Humphrey deprived of his parents. I know not who were his guardians or trustees, or what steps, if any, were taken to inquire into the Alderman's estate; but when, next year, the Great Fire of London destroyed the house in Thames-street, with so many others, all the estate, whatever it had been, vanished, and could no more be traced. There must have been large moneys owing. It is certain that he had ventures in ships. It has been supposed that he owned many houses in the City, but they were destroyed and their very sites for-gotten, and no deeds or papers, or any proof of ownership, were left. Moreover, there was nobody charged with inquiring into this orphan's affairs. Therefore, in the general confusion, nothing at all was saved out of what had been a goodly property, and the child Humphrey was left without a guinea in the world. Thus unstable is Fortune.

I know not whether Humphrey received a fall in his infancy, or whether he was born with his deformity, but the poor lad grew up with a crooked figure, one shoulder being higher than the other, and his legs short, so that he looked as if his arms were too long for him. We, who saw him thus every day, paid no heed, nor did he suffer from any of those cruel gibes and taunts which are often passed upon lads thus afflicted. As he was by nature or misfortune debarred from the rough sports which pleased his cousins, the boy gave himself up to reading and study, and to music. His manner of speech was soft and gentle; his voice was always sweet, and afterwards became strong as well, so that I have never heard a better singer. His face —ah! my brother Humphrey, what a lovely face was thine! All goodness, surely, was stamped upon that face. Never, never did an unworthy thought defile that candid soul, or a bad action cast a cloud upon that brow!

As for Robin, Sir Christopher's grand-son, I think he was always what he is still, namely,

one of a joyous heart and a cheerful countenance. As a boy he laughed continually, would sing more willingly than read, would play rather than work, loved to course and shoot and ride better than to learn Latin grammar, and would readily off coat and fight with any who invited him. Yet not a fool or a clown, but always a gentleman in manners, and one who read such things as behove a country gentleman, and scrupulous as to the point of honour. Such as he is still such he was always. And of a comely presence, with a rosy cheek and bright eyes, and the strength of a young David, as well as his ruddy and goodly countenance. The name of David, I am told, means 'darling.' Therefore, ought my Robin to have been named David. There were two other boys—Barnaby, my brother, who was six years older than myself, and, therefore, always to me a great boy; and Benjamin, the son of the Rev. Mr. Boscorel—the Rector. Barnaby grew up so broad and strong that at twelve he would have passed easily for seventeen; his square shoulders,

deep chest, and big limbs made him like a bull for strength. Yet he was shorter than most, and looked shorter than he was by reason of his great breadth. He was always exercising his strength; he would toss the hay with the haymakers, and carry the corn for the reapers, and thresh with the flail, and guide the plough. He loved to climb great trees, and to fell them with an axe. Everybody in the village admired his wonderful strength. Unfortunately, he loved not books, and could never learn anything, so that when, by dint of great application and many repetitions, he had learned a little piece of a Latin verb, he straightway forgot it in the night, and so, next day, there was another flogging. But that he heeded little. He was five years older than Robin, and taught him all his woodcraft—where to find pheasants' eggs, how to catch squirrels, how to trap weasels and stoats, how to hunt the otter, how to make a goldfinch whistle and a raven talk—never was there such a master of that wisdom which doth not advance a man in the world.

Now, before Barnaby's birth, his mother, after the manner of Hannah, gave him solemnly unto the Lord all the days of his life, and after his birth, her husband, after the manner of Elkanah, said 'Do what seemeth thee good; only the Lord establish his word.' He was, therefore, to become a minister, like his father before him. Alas! poor Barnaby could not even learn the Latin verbs, and his heart, it was found, as he grew older, was wholly set upon the things of this world. Wherefore, my mother prayed for him daily while she sat at her work, that his heart might be turned, and that he might get understanding.

As for the fourth of the boys, Benjamin Boscorel, he was about two years younger than Barnaby, a boy who, for want of a mother, and because his father was careless of him, grew up rough and coarse in manners and in speech, and boastful of his powers. To hear Ben talk you would think that all the boys of his school (the grammar school of Sherborne) were heroes; that the Latin taught was of a quality superior to that which Robin and

Humphrey learnt of my father; and that when he himself went out into the world the superiority of his parts would be immediately perceived and acknowledged.

Those who watch boys at play together—girls more early learn to govern themselves and to conceal their thoughts, if not their tempers—may, after a manner, predict the future character of every one. There is the man who wants all for himself, and still wants more, and will take all and yield nothing, save on compulsion, and cares not a straw about his neighbour—such was Benjamin, as a boy. There is the man who gives all generously—such was Robin. There is, again, the man whose mind is raised above the petty cares of the multitude, and dwells apart, occupied with great thoughts—such was Humphrey. Lastly, there is the man who can act but cannot think; who is born to be led; who is full of courage and of strength, and leaves all to his commander, captain, or master—such was Barnaby.

As I think of these lads it seems as if the

kind of man into which each would grow must have been stamped upon their foreheads. Perhaps to the elders this prognostic was easy to read.

They suffered me to play with them or to watch them at play. When the boys went off to the woods I went with them. I watched them set their traps—I ran when they ran. And then, as now, I loved Robin and Humphrey. But I could not endure—no; not even the touch of him—Benjamin, with the loud laugh and the braggart voice, who laughed at me because I was a girl and could not fight. The time came when he did not laugh at me because I was a girl. And oh! to think—only to think—of the time that came after that!

CHAPTER IV.

SIR CHRISTOPHER.

AT the mere remembrance of Sir Christopher, I am fain to lay down my pen and to weep, as for one whose goodness was unsurpassed, and whose end was undeserved. Good works, I know, are rags, and men cannot deserve the mercy of God by any merits of their own; but a good man—a man whose heart is full of justice, mercy, virtue, and truth—is so rare a creature, that when there is found such a one, his salvation seems assured. Is it not wonderful that there are among us so many good Christians, but so few good men? I am, indeed, in private duty bound to acknowledge Sir Christopher's goodness to me and to mine. He was, as I have said, the mainstay of our

household. Had we depended wholly on my mother's work, we should sometimes have fared miserably indeed. Nay, he did more. Though a Justice of the Peace, he invited my father every Sunday evening to the Manor House for spiritual conversation, not only for his own profit, but knowing that to expound was to my father the breath of his nostrils, so that if he could not expound he must die. In person, Sir Christopher was tall; after the fashion (which I love) of the days when he was a young man he wore his own hair, which, being now white and long, became his venerable face much better than any wig—white, black, or brown. He was generally dressed, as became his station of simple country gentleman, in a plush coat with silver buttons, and for the most part he wore boots, being of an active habit and always walking about his fields or in his gardens among his flowers and his fruit-trees. He was so good a sportsman that with his rod, his gun, and his hawk he provided his table with everything except beef, mutton, and

pork. In religion he inclined to Independency, being above all things an upholder of private judgment; in politics, he denied the Divine right, and openly said that a Challis might be a King as well as a Stuart; he abhorred the Pope and all his works; and though he was now for a Monarchy, he would have the King's own power limited by the Parliament. In his manners he was grave and dignified; not austere, but one who loved a cheerful companion. He rode once a week, on market day, to Sherborne, where he dined with his brother Justices, hearing and discussing the news, though news comes but slowly from London to these parts—it was fourteen days after the landing of the King in the year 1660 that the bells of Sherborne Minster rang for that event. Sometimes a copy of the *London Gazette* came down by the Exeter coach, or some of the company had lately passed a night where the coach stopped, and conversed with travellers from London and heard the news. For the rest of the week, his Honour was at home. For the

most part he sat in the hall. In the middle stands the great oak table where all the household sit at meals together. There was little difference between the dishes served above and those below the salt, save that those above had each a glass of strong ale or of wine after dinner and supper. One side of the hall was hung with arras worked with representations of herbs, beasts, and birds. On the other side was the great chimney, where in the winter a noble fire was kept up all day long. On either side of it hung fox skins, otter skins, pole-cat skins, with fishing-rods, stags' heads, horns, and other trophies of the chase. At the end was a screen covered with old coats of mail, helmets, bucklers, lances, pikes, pistols, guns with match-locks, and a trophy of swords arranged in form of a star. Below the cornice hung a row of leathern jerkins, black and dusty, which had formerly been worn in place of armour by the common sort. In the oriel window was a sloping desk, having on one side the Bible and on the other Foxe's 'Book

of Martyrs.' Below was a shelf with other books, such as Vincent Wing's Almanack, King Charles's 'Golden Rules,' 'Glanville on Apparitions,' the 'Complete Justice,' and the 'Book of Farriery.' There was also in the hall a great side-board, covered with Turkey work, pewter, brass, and fine linen. In the cupboard below was his Honour's plate, reported to be worth a great deal of money.

Sir Christopher sat in a high chair, curiously carved, with arms and a triangular seat. It had belonged to the family for many generations. Within reach of the chair was the tobacco-jar, his pipe, and his favourite book—namely, 'The Gentleman's Academie: or the Book of St. Albans, being a Work on Hunting, Hawking, and Armorie,' by Dame Juliana Berners, who wrote it two hundred and fifty years ago. Sir Christopher loved especially to read aloud that chapter in which it is proved that the distinction between gentleman and churl began soon after the Creation, when Cain proved himself a churl, and Seth was created Gentleman and Esquire

or Armiger by Adam, his father. This distinction was renewed after the Flood by Noah himself, a gentleman by lineal descent from Seth. In the case of his sons, Ham was the churl, and the other two were the gentlemen. I have sometimes thought that, according to this author, all of us who are descended from Shem or Japhet should be gentlemen, in which case there would be no churl in Great Britain at all. But certainly there are many; so that, to my poor thinking, Dame Juliana Berners must be wrong.

There is, in addition to the great hall, the best parlour. But as this was never wanted, the door of it was never opened except at cleaning time. Then, to be sure, one saw a room furnished very grand, with chairs in Turkey work, and hung round with family portraits. The men were clad in armour, as if they had all been soldiers or commanders; the women were mostly dressed as shepherdesses, with crooks in their hands and flowing robes. In the garden was a long bowling green, where in summer Sir Christopher took

great pleasure in that ancient game: below the garden was a broad fishpond, made by damming the stream: above and below the pond there were trout, and in the pond were carp and jack. A part of the garden was laid out for flowers, a part for the still-room, and a part for fruit. I have never seen anywhere a better ordered garden for the still-room. Everything grew therein that the housewife wants: sweet cicely, rosemary, burnet, sweet basil, chives, dill, clary, angelica, lipwort, tarragon, thyme and mint; there were, as Lord Bacon, in his 'Essay on Gardens,' would have, 'whole alleys of them to have the pleasure when you walk or tread.' There were thick hedges to keep off the east wind in spring, so that one would enjoy the sun when that cold wind was blowing. But in Somerset that wind hath not the bitterness that it possesses along the eastern shores of the land.

Every morning Sir Christopher sat in his Justice's chair under the helmets and the coats of armour. Sometimes gipsies would

be brought before him, charged with stealing poultry or poisoning pigs; or a rogue and vagabond would stray into the parish; these gentry were very speedily whipped out of it. As for our own people, there is nowhere a more quiet and orderly village; quarrels there are with the clothiers' men, who will still try to beat down the value of the women's work, and bickerings sometimes between the women themselves. Sir Christopher was judge for all. Truly he was a patriarch like unto Abraham, and a father to his people. Never was sick man suffered to want for medicines and succour; never was aged man suffered to lack food and fire; did any youth show leanings towards sloth, profligacy, or drunkenness, he was straightway admonished, and that right soundly, so that his back and shoulders would remind him for many days of his sin. By evildoers Sir Christopher was feared as much as he was beloved by all good men and true. This also is proper to one in high station and authority.

In the evening he amused himself in

playing backgammon with the boys, or chess with his son-in-law, Mr. Boscorel: but the latter with less pleasure, because he was generally defeated in the game. He greatly delighted in the conversation and society of that learned and ingenious gentleman, though on matters of religion and of politics his son-in-law belonged to the opposite way of thinking.

I do not know why Mr. Boscorel took upon himself holy orders. God forbid that I should speak ill of any in authority, and especially of one who was kind and charitable to all, and refused to become a persecutor of those who desired freedom of conscience and of speech. But if the chief duty of a minister of the Gospel is to preach, then was Mr. Boscorel little better than a dog who cannot bark. He did not preach; that is to say, he could not, like my father, mount the pulpit, Bible in hand, and teach, admonish, argue, and convince without a written word. He read every Sunday morning a brief discourse,

which might, perhaps, have instructed Oxford scholars, but would not be understood by the common people. As for arguments on religion, spiritual conversation, or personal experience of grace, he would never suffer such talk in his presence, because it argued private judgment and caused, he said, the growth of spiritual pride. And of those hot Gospellers whose zeal brings them to prison and the pillory, he spoke with contempt. His conversation, I must acknowledge, was full of delight and instruction, if the things which one learned of him were not vanities. He had travelled in Italy and in France, and he loved to talk of poetry, architecture, statuary, medals and coins, antiquities and so forth—things harmless and, perhaps, laudable in themselves, but for a preacher of the Gospel, who ought to think of nothing but his sacred calling, they are surely superfluities. Or he would talk of the manners and customs of strange countries, and especially of the Pope. This person, whom I have been taught to look upon as from the very nature of his

pretensions the most wicked of living men, Mr. Boscorel regarded with as much toleration as he bestowed upon an Independent. Then he would tell us of London and the manners of the great ; of the King, whom he had seen, and the Court, seeming to wink at things which one ought to hold in abhorrence. He even told us of the playhouse, which, according to my father, is the most subtle engine ever invented by the Devil for the destruction of souls. Yet Mr. Boscorel sighed to think that he could no longer visit that place of amusement. He loved also music, and played movingly upon the violoncello ; and he could make pictures with pen, pencil, or brush. I have some of his paintings still, especially a picture which he drew of Humphrey playing the fiddle, his great eyes looking upwards as if the music was drawing his soul to heaven. I know not why he painted a halo about his face. Mr. Boscorel also loved poetry, and quoted Shakspeare and Ben Jonson more readily than the Word of God.

In person he was of a goodly countenance,

having clear-cut features; a straight nose, rather long; soft eyes, and a gentle voice. He was dainty in his apparel, loving fine clean linen and laced neckerchiefs, but was not a gross feeder; he drank but little wine, but would discourse upon fine wines, such as the Tokay of Hungary, Commandery wine from Cyprus, and the like, and he seemed better pleased to watch the colour of the wine in the glass, and to breathe its perfume, than to drink it. Above all things he hated coarse speech and rude manners. He spoke of men as if he stood on an eminence watching them, and always with pity, as if he belonged to a nobler creation. How could such a man have such a son?

CHAPTER V.

THE RUNAWAY.

hath heard, and old people still remember, how one Act after the other was passed for the suppression of the Nonconformists, whom the Church of England tried to extirpate, but could not. Had these laws been truly carried into effect, there would have been great suffering among the Dissenters; but, in order to enforce them, every man's hand would have been turned against his neighbour, and this—thank God!—is not possible in Somerset.

For example, the Act of Uniformity provided not only for the ejectment of the Nonconforming ministers (which was duly carried out), but also enacted that none of them should take scholars without the license of the Bishop. Yet many of the ejected ministers maintained themselves in this way openly, without the Bishop's license. They were not molested, though they might be threatened by some hot Episcopalian ; nor were the Bishops anxious to set the country afire by attempting to enforce this law. One must not take from an honest neighbour, whatever an unjust law may command, his only way of living.

Again, the Act passed two years later punished all persons with fine and imprisonment who attended conventicles. Yet the conventicles continued to be held over the whole country, because it was impossible for the Justices to fine and imprison men with whom they sat at dinner every market-day, with whom they took their punch and tobacco, and whom they knew to be honest and God-fearing folk. Again, how could

they fine and imprison their own flesh and blood? Why, in every family there were some who loved the meeting-house better than the steeple-house. Laws have little power when they are against the conscience of the people.

Thirdly, there was an Act prohibiting ministers from residing within five miles of the village or town where they had preached. This was a most cruel and barbarous Act, because it sent the poor ministers away from the help of their friends. Yet how was it regarded? My father, for his part, continued to live at Bradford Orcas without let or hindrance, and so, no doubt, did many more.

Again, another Act was passed giving authority to Justices of the Peace to break open doors and to take in custody persons found assembling for worship. I have heard of disturbances at Taunton, where the Magistrates carried things with a high hand; but I think the people who met to worship after their own fashion were little disturbed. Among the Churchmen were some, no doubt, who remembered the snubs and rubs they

had themselves experienced, and the memory may have made them revengeful. All the persecution, it is certain, was not on the side of the Church. There was, for instance, the case of Dr. Walter Raleigh, Dean of Wells, who was clapped into a noisome prison where the plague had broken out. He did not die of that disease, but was done to death in the jail, barbarously, by one David Barrett, shoemaker, who was never punished for the murder, but was afterwards made Constable of the City. There was also the case of the Rev. Dr. Piers, whom I have myself seen, for he lived to a good old age. He was a Prebendary of Wells, and, being driven forth, was compelled to turn farmer, and to work with his own hands—digging, hoeing, ploughing, reaping, and threshing—when he should have been in his study. Every week this reverend and learned Doctor of Divinity was to be seen at Ilminster Market, standing beside the pillars with his cart, among the farmers and their wives, selling his apples, cheese, and cabbages.

I say that no doubt many remembered these things. Yet the affection of the people went forth to the Nonconformists and the ejected ministers, as was afterwards but too well proved. I have been speaking of things which happened before my recollection. It was in the year 1665, four years after the Ejection, that I was born. My father would have named me Grace Abounding, but my mother called me Alice, after her own name. I was thus six years younger than my brother Barnaby, and two years younger than Robin and Humphrey.

The first thing that I can recollect is a kind of picture, preserved, so to speak, in my head. At the open door is a woman spinning at the wheel. She is a woman with a pale, grave face; she works diligently, and for the most part in silence; if she speaks, it is to encourage or to admonish a little girl who plays in the garden outside. Her lips move as she works, because she communes with her thoughts all day long. From time to time she turns her head and looks with anxiety

into the other room, where sits her husband at his table.

Before him stand three boys. They are Barnaby, Robin, and Humphrey. They are learning Latin. The room is piled with books on shelves and books on the floor. In the corner is a pallet, which is the master's bed by night. I hear the voices of the boys who repeat their lessons, and the admonishing of their master. I can see through the open door the boys themselves. One, a stout and broad lad, is my brother Barnaby: he hangs his head and forgets his lesson, and causes his father to punish him every day. He receives admonition with patience; yet profiteth nothing. The next is Humphrey; he is already a lad of grave and modest carriage, who loves his book and learns diligently. The third is Robin, whose parts are good, were his application equal to his intelligence. He is impatient, and longs for the time when he may close his book and go to play again.

Poor Barnaby! at the sight of a Latin Grammar he would feel sick. He would

willingly have taken a flogging every day—to be sure, that generally happened to him—in order to escape his lessons and be off to the fields and woods.

It was the sight of his rueful face—yet never sad except at lessons—which made my mother sigh when she saw him dull but patient over his book. Had he stayed at home I know not what could have been done with him, seeing that to become a Preacher of the Gospel was beyond even the power of prayer (the Lord having clearly expressed His will in this matter). He would have had to clap on a leathern apron, and become a wheelwright or blacksmith; nothing better than an honest trade was possible for him.

But (whether happily or not) a strange whim seized the boy when he was fourteen years of age. He would go to sea. How he came to think of the sea I know not; he had never seen the sea; there were no sailors in the village; there was no talk of the sea. Perhaps Humphrey, who read many books, told him of the great doings of our sailors on

the Spanish Main and elsewhere. Perhaps some of the clothiers' men, who are a roving and unsettled crew, had been sailors—some, I know, had been soldiers under Oliver. However, this matters not, Barnaby must needs become a sailor.

When first he broke this resolution, which he did secretly, to my mother, she began to weep and lament, because everybody knows how dreadful is the life of a sailor, and how full of dangers. She begged him to put the thought out of his head, and to apply himself again to his books.

'Mother,' he said, 'it is no use. What comes in at one ear goes out at the other. Nothing sticks: I shall never be a scholar.'

'Then, my son, learn an honest trade.'

'What? Become the village cobbler—or the blacksmith? Go hat in hand to his Honour, when my father should have been a Bishop, and my mother is a gentlewoman? That will I not. I will go and be a sailor. All sailors are gentlemen. I shall rise and become first mate, and then second captain,

and, lastly, captain in command. Who knows? I may go and fight the Spaniard, if I am lucky.'

'Oh, my son, canst thou not stay at home and go to church, and consider the condition of thine immortal soul? Of sailors it is well known that their language is made up of profane oaths, and that they are all profligates and drunkards. Consider, my son'—my mother laid her hand upon his arm—'what were Heaven to me, if I have not my dear children with me as well as my husband? How could I praise the Lord if I were thinking of my son who was not with me, but—ah! Heaven forbid the thought!'

Barnaby made no reply. What could he say in answer to my mother's tears? Yet I think she must have understood very well that her son, having got this resolution into his head, would never give it up.

'Oh!' she said, 'when thou wast a little baby in my arms, Barnaby—who art now so big and strong'—she looked at him with the wonder and admiration that women feel when

their sons grow big and stout—'I prayed that God would accept thee as an offering for His service. Thou art vowed unto the Lord, my son, as much as Samuel. Do you think he complained of his lessons? What would have happened, think you, to Samuel if he had taken off his ephod and declared that he would serve no longer at the altar, but must take spear and shield, and go to fight the Amalekite?'

Said Barnaby, in reply, speaking from an unregenerate heart, 'Mother, had I been Samuel, to wear an ephod and to learn the Latin syntax every day, I should have done that. Ay! I would have done it, even if I knew that at the first skirmish an arrow would pierce my heart.'

It was after a great flogging, on account of the passive voice or some wrestling with the syntax, that Barnaby plucked up courage to tell his father what he wished to do.

'With my consent,' said my father, sternly, 'thou shalt never become a sailor. As soon would I send thee to become a buffoon in

a playhouse. Never dare to speak of it again.'

Barnaby hung his head and said nothing.

Then my mother, who knew his obstinate disposition, took him to Sir Christopher, who chid him roundly, telling him that there was work for him on land, else he would have been born beside the coast, where the lads take naturally to the sea: that being, as he was, only an ignorant boy, and landborn, he could not know the dangers which he would encounter: that some ships are cast away on desert islands, where the survivors remain in misery until they die, and some on lands where savages devour them, and some are dragged down by calamaries and other dreadful monsters, and some are burned at sea, their crews having to choose miserably between burning and drowning, and some are taken by the enemy, and the sailors clapped into dungeons and tortured by the Accursed Inquisition.

Many more things did Sir Christopher set forth, showing the miserable life and the

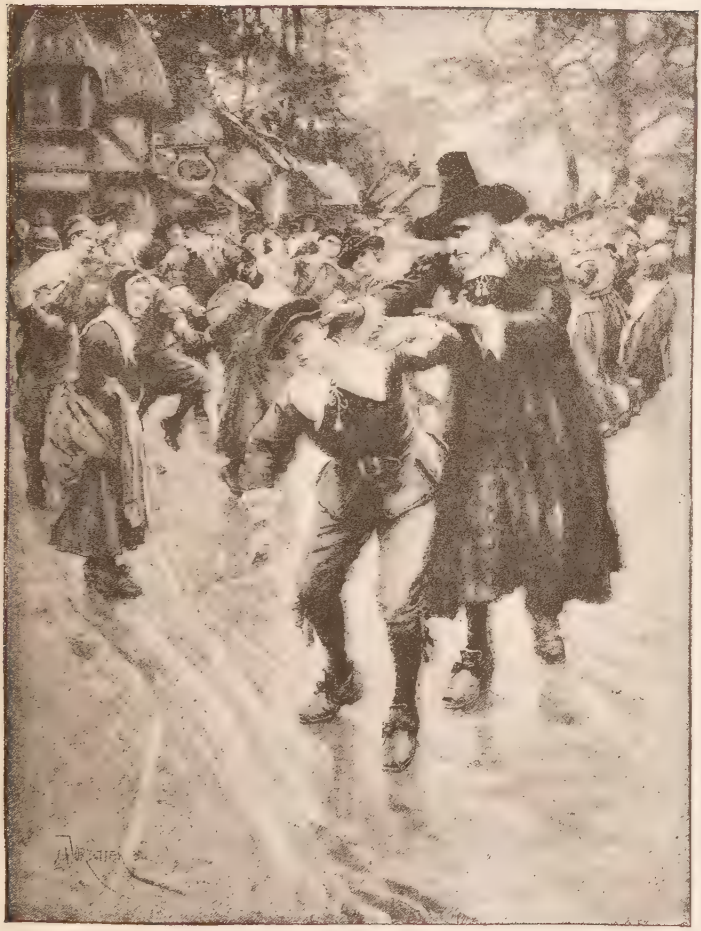
wretched end of the sailor. But Barnaby never changed countenance, and though my mother bade him note this and mark that, and take heed unto his Honour's words, his face showed no melting. 'Twas always an obstinate lad; nay, it was his obstinacy alone which kept him from his learning. Otherwise he might perhaps have become as great a scholar as Humphrey.

'Sir,' he said, when Sir Christopher had no other word to say, 'with submission, I would still choose to be a sailor, if I could.'

In the end he obtained his wish. That is to say, since no one would help him towards it, he helped himself. And this, I think, is the only way in which men do ever get what they want.

It happened one evening that there passed through the village a man with a pipe and tabor, on which he played so movingly that all the people turned out to listen. For my own part I was with my mother, yet I ran to the garden-gate and leaned my head over, drawn by the sound of the music. Presently

the boys and girls began to take hands together and to dance. I dare not say that to dance is sinful, because David danced. But it was so regarded by my father, so that when he passed by them, on his way home from taking the air, and actually saw his own son Barnaby in the middle of the dancers, footing it merrily with them all, joyfully leading one girl up and the other down at *John come and kiss me now*, he was seized with a mighty wrath, and, catching his son sharply by the ear, led him out of the throng and so home. For that evening Barnaby went supperless to bed, with the promise of such a flogging in the morning as would cause him to remember for the rest of his life the sinfulness of dancing. Never had I seen my father so angry. I trembled before his wrathful eyes. But Barnaby faced him with steady looks, making answer none, yet not showing the least repentance or fear. I thought it was because a flogging had no terrors for him. The event proved that I was wrong ; that was not the reason : he had resolved to run away, and when we awoke in



'He was seized with a mighty wrath, and, catching his son sharply by the ear, led him out of the throng.'

the morning he was gone. He had crept down-stairs in the night ; he had taken half a loaf of bread and a great cantle of soft cheese, and had gone away. He had not gone for fear of the rod : he had run away with design to go to sea. Perhaps he had gone to Bristol ; perhaps to Plymouth ; perhaps to Lyme. My mother wept, and my father sighed ; and for ten years more we neither saw nor heard anything of Barnaby, not even whether he was dead or living.

CHAPTER VI.

BENJAMIN, LORD CHANCELLOR.

SUMMER follows winter, and winter summer, in due course, turning children into young men and maidens, changing school into work, and play into love, and love into marriage, and so onwards to the churchyard, where we all presently lie, hopeful of Heaven's mercy, whether Mr. Boscorel did stand beside our open grave in his white surplice, or my father in his black gown.

Barnaby was gone; the other three grew tall, and would still be talking of the lives before them. Girls do never look forward to the future with the eagerness and joy of boys. To the dullest boy it seems a fine thing to be master of his own actions, even if that liberty

lead to whipping-post, pillory, or gallows. To boys of ambition and imagination the gifts of Fortune show like the splendid visions of a prophet. They think that earthly fame will satisfy the soul. Perhaps women see these glories and their true worth with clearer eye as not desiring them. And truly it seems a small thing, after a life spent in arduous toil, and with one foot already in the grave, to obtain fortune, rank, or title.

Benjamin and Humphrey were lads of ambition. To both, but in fields which lay far apart, the best life seemed to be that which is spent among men on the ant-hill where all are driving or being driven, loading each other with burdens intolerable, or with wealth or with honours, and then dying and being forgotten in a moment—which we call London. In the kindly country one stands apart and sees the vanity of human wishes. Yet the ambition of Humphrey, it must be confessed, was noble, because it was not for his own advancement, but for the good of mankind.

'I shall stay at home,' said Robin. 'You

two may go if you please. Perhaps you will like the noise of London, where a man cannot hear himself speak, they say, for the roaring of the crowd, the ringing of the bells, and the rumbling of the carts. As for me, what is good enough for my grandfather will be surely good enough for me.'

It should, indeed, be good enough for anybody to spend his days after the manner of Sir Christopher, administering justice for the villagers, with the weekly ordinary at Sherborne for company, the green fields and his garden for pleasure and for exercise, and the welfare of his soul for prayer. Robin, besides, loved to go forth with hawk and gun ; to snare the wild creatures ; to hunt the otter and the fox ; to bait the badger, and trap the stoat and weasel ; to course the hares. But cities and crowds, even if they should be shouting in his honour, did never draw him, even after he had seen them. Nor was he ever tempted to believe any manner of life more full of delight and more consistent with the end of man's creation than the rural life,

the air of the fields, the following of the plough for the men, and the spinning-wheel for the women.

'I shall be a lawyer,' said Benjamin, puffing out his cheeks and squaring his shoulders. 'Very well, then, I say I shall be a great lawyer. What? None of your pettifogging tribe for me: I shall step to the front, and stay there. What? Someone must have the prizes and the promotion. There are always places falling vacant and honours to be given away: they shall be given to me. Why not to me as well as another?'

'Well,' said Robin, 'you are strong enough to take them, willy-nilly.'

'I am strong enough,' he replied, with conviction. 'First, I shall be called to the Outer Bar, where I shall plead in stuff—I saw them at Exeter last 'Sizes. Next, I shall be summoned to become King's Counsel, when I shall flaunt it in silk. Who but I?' Then he seemed to grow actually three inches taller, so great is the power of imagination. He was already six feet in height, his shoulders

broad, and his face red and fiery, so that now he looked very big and tall. 'Then my Inn will make me a Bencher, and I shall sit at the high table in term-time. And the attorneys shall run after me and fight with each other for my services in Court, so that in every great case I shall be heard thundering before the jury, and making the witnesses perjure themselves with terror—for which they will be afterwards flogged. I shall belong to the King's party—none of your canting Whigs for me. When the high treason cases come on, I shall be the counsel for the Crown. That is the high road to advancement.'

'This is very well, so far,' said Robin, laughing. 'Ben is too modest, however. He does not get on fast enough.'

'All in good time,' Ben replied. 'I mean to get on as fast as anybody. But I shall follow the beaten road. First, favour with attorneys and those who have suits in the Courts; then the ear of the Judge. I know not how one gets the ear of the Judge'—he looked despondent for a moment, then he held

up his head again—'but I shall find out. Others have found out—why not I? What? I am no fool, am I?'

'Certainly not, Ben. But as yet we stick at King's Counsel.'

'After the ear of the Judge, the favour of the Crown. What do I care who is King? It is the King who hath preferment and place and honours in his gift. Where these are given away, there shall I be found. Next am I made Serjeant-at-Law. Then I am saluted as "Brother" by the Judges on the Bench, while all the others burst with envy. After that I shall myself be called to the Bench. I am already "my Lord"—why do you laugh, Robin?—and a Knight: Sir Benjamin Boscorel—Sir Benjamin.' Here he puffed out his cheeks again and swung his shoulders like a very great person indeed.

'Proceed, Sir Benjamin,' said Humphrey, gravely, while Robin laughed.

'When I am a Judge I promise you I will rate the barristers and storm at the witnesses and admonish the jury until there shall be

no other question in their minds but to find out first what is my will in the case, and then to govern themselves accordingly. I will be myself Judge and jury and all. Oh ! I have seen the Judge at last Exeter 'Sizes. He made all to shake in their shoes. I shall not stop there. Chief Baron I shall be, perhaps —but on that point I have not yet made up my mind—and then Lord Chancellor.' He paused to take breath, and looked around him, grandeur and authority upon his brow. 'Lord Chancellor,' he repeated, 'on the Woolsack !'

'You will then,' said Robin, 'be raised to the Peerage—first Lord Boscorel ; or perhaps, if your Lordship will so honour this poor village, Lord Bradford Orcas '——

'Earl of Sherborne I have chosen for title,' said Benjamin. 'And while I am climbing up the ladder, where wilt thou be, Humphrey ? Grovelling in the mud with the poor devils who cannot rise ?'

'Nay, I shall have a small ladder of my own, Ben. I find great comfort in the thought

that when your Lordship is roaring and bawling with the gout—your noble toe being like a ball of fire and your illustrious foot swathed in flannel—I shall be called upon to drive away the pain, and you will honour me with the title not only of humble cousin, but also of rescuer and preserver. Will it not be honour enough to cure the Right Honourable the Earl of Sherborne (first of the name), the Lord Chancellor, of his gout and to restore him to the duties of his great office, so that once more he shall be the dread of evildoers and of all who have to appear before him? As yet, my Lord, your extremities, I perceive, are free from that disease —the result, too often, of that excess in wine which besets the great.'

Here Robin laughed again, and so did Benjamin. Nobody could use finer language than Humphrey, if he pleased.

'A fine ambition!' said Ben. 'To wear a black velvet coat and a great wig; to carry a gold-headed cane; all day long to listen while the patient tells of his gripes and pains;

to mix boluses and to compound nauseous draughts!'

'Well,' Humphrey laughed, 'if you are Lord Chancellor, Ben, you will, I hope, give us good laws, and so make the nation happy and prosperous. While you are doing this, I will be keeping you in health for the good of the country. I say that this is a fine ambition.'

'And Robin, here, will sit in the great chair and have the rogues haled before him, and order the Head-borough to bring out his cat-o'-nine-tails. In the winter evenings, he will play backgammon, and in the summer, bowls. Then a posset, and to bed. And never any change from year to year. A fine life, truly!'

'Truly, I think it is a very fine life,' said Robin; 'while you make the laws, I will take care that they are obeyed. What better service is there than to cause good laws to be obeyed? Make good laws, my Lord Chancellor, and be thankful that you will have faithful, law-abiding men to carry them out.'

Thus they talked. Presently the time came when the lads must leave the village and go forth to prepare for such course as should be allotted to them, whether it led to greatness or to obscurity.

Benjamin went first, being sixteen years of age and a great fellow, as I have said, broad-shouldered and lusty, with a red face, a strong voice, and a loud laugh. In no respect did he resemble his father, who was delicate in manner and in speech. He was to be entered at Gray's Inn, where, under some counsel learned in the law, he was to read until such time as he should be called.

He came to bid me farewell, which at first, until he frightened me with the things he said, I took kindly of him.

'Child,' he said, 'I am going to London, and, I suppose, I shall not come back to this village for a long time. Nay, were it not for thee, I should not wish to come back at all.'

'Why for me, Ben?'

'Because'—here his red face became redder, and he stammered a little; but not much, for

he was ever a lad of confidence—'because, child, thou art not yet turned twelve, which is young to be hearing of such a thing. Yet a body may as well make things safe. And as for Humphrey or Robin interfering, I will break their heads with my cudgel if they do. Remember that, then.' He shook his finger at me, threatening.

'In what business should they interfere?' I asked.

'Kiss me, Alice'—here he tried to lay his arm round my neck, but I ran away. 'Oh! if thou art skittish, I care not: all in good time. Very well, then; let us make things safe. Alice, when I come back thou wilt be seventeen or eighteen, which is an age when girls should marry'——

'I have nothing to do with marrying, Ben.'

'Not yet. If I mistake not, child, thou wilt then be as beautiful as a rose in June.'

'I want no foolish talk, Ben. Let me go.'

'Then I shall be twenty-one years of age,

practising in the courts. I shall go the Western Circuit, in order to see thee often—partly to keep an eye upon thee and partly to warn off other men. Because, child, it is my purpose to marry thee myself. Think upon that, now.'

At this I laughed.

'Laugh if you please, my dear; I shall marry thee as soon as the way is open to the Bench and the Woolsack. What? I can see a long way ahead. I will tell thee what I see. There is a monstrous great crowd of people in the street staring at a glass coach. "Who is the lovely lady?" they ask. "The lovely lady"—that is you, Alice; none other—"with the diamonds at her neck and the gold chain, in the glass coach?" says one who knows her liveries: "'tis the lady of the great Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Sherborne." And the women fall green with envy of her happiness and great good fortune and her splendour. Courage, child: I go to prepare the way. Oh! thou knowest not the

grand things that I shall pour into thy lap when I am a Judge.'

This was the first time that any man spoke to me of love. But Benjamin was always masterful, and had no respect for such a nice point as the wooing of a maiden—which, methinks, should be gentle and respectful, not as if a woman was like a savage to be tempted by a string of beads, or so foolish as to desire with her husband such gauds as diamonds, or gold chains, or a glass coach. Nor doth a woman like to be treated as if she was to be carried off by force like the Sabine women of old.

The Rector rode to London with his son. It is a long journey, over rough ways ; but it pleased him once more to see that great city, where there are pictures and statues and books to gladden the hearts of such as love these things. And on the way home he sojourned for a few days at his old college of All Souls, where were still left one or two of his old friends. Then he rode back to his village. 'There are but two places in this

country,' he said, 'or perhaps three, at most, where a gentleman and a scholar, or one who loveth the fine arts, would choose to live. These are London and Oxford, and perhaps the Sister University upon the Granta. Well, I have once more been privileged to witness the humours of the Court and the town : I have once more been permitted to sniff the air of a great library. Let us be thankful.' He showed his thankfulness with a sigh which was almost a groan.

It was three years before we saw Benjamin again. Then he returned, but not for long. Like his father, he loved London better than the country, but for other reasons. Certainly, he cared nothing for those arts which so much delighted the Rector, and the air of a coffee-house pleased him more than the perfume of books in a library. When he left us he was a rustic ; when he came back he was already what they call a fopling : that is to say, when he went to pay his respects to Sir Christopher, his grandfather, he wore a very fine cravat of Flanders lace, with silken hose, and lace and

ribbons at his wrist. He was also scented with bergamot, and wore a peruke, which, while he talked, he combed and curled, to keep the curls of this monstrous head-dress in place. Gentlemen must, I suppose, wear this invention, and one of the learned professions must show the extent of the learning by the splendours of his full-bottomed wig. Yet I think that a young man looks most comely while he wears his own hair. He had cocked his hat, on which were bows of riband, and he wore a sword. He spoke also in a mincing London manner, having now forsworn the honest broad speech of Somerset; and (but not in the presence of his elders) he used strange oaths and ejaculations.

'Behold him!' said his father, by no means displeased at his son's foppery, because he ever loved the city fashions, and thought that a young man did well to dress and to comport himself after the way of the world. 'Behold him! Thus he sits in the coffee-house; thus he shows himself in the pit. Youth is the time for finery and for folly,

Alas! would that we could bring back that time! What saith John Dryden—glorious John—of Sir Fopling?—

His various modes from various fathers follow:
One taught the toss, and one the new French wallow;
His sword knot this, his cravat that, designed,
And this the yard-long snake he twirls behind.
From one the sacred periwig he gained,
Which wind ne'er blew, nor touch of hat profaned."

'Well, Ben,' said Sir Christopher, 'if the mode can help thee to the Bench, why not follow the mode?'

'It will not hinder, Sir,' Ben replied. 'A man who hath his fortune to make does well to be seen everywhere, and to be dressed like other men of his time.'

One must do Benjamin the justice to acknowledge that though, like the young gentlemen his friends and companions, his dress was foppish, and his talk was of the pleasures of the town, he suffered nothing to stand in the way of his advancement. He was resolved upon being a great lawyer, and, therefore, if he spent the evening in drinking,

singing, and making merry, he was reading in chambers or else attending the Courts all the day, and neglected nothing that would make him master of his profession. And, though of learning he had little, his natural parts were so good, and his resolution was so strong, that I doubt not he would have achieved his ambition had it not been for the circumstances which afterwards cut short his career. His course of life, by his own boastful confession, was profligate; his friends were drinkers and revellers; his favourite haunt was the tavern, where they all drank punch and sang ungodly songs, and smoked tobacco; and of religion he seemed to have no care whatever.

I was afraid that he would return to the nauseous subject which he had opened three years before. Therefore, I continued with my mother, and would give him no chance to speak with me. But he found me, and caught me returning home one evening.

'Alice,' he said, 'I feared that I might have to go away without a word alone with thee.'

'I want no words alone, Benjamin. Let me pass!' For he stood before me in the way.

'Not so fast, pretty!'—he caught me by the wrist, and, being a young man so strong and determined, he held me as by a vice. 'Not so fast, Mistress Alice. First, my dear, let me tell thee that my purpose still holds—nay'—here he swore a most dreadful, impious oath—'I am more resolved than ever. There is not a woman, even in London, that is to be compared with thee, child. What? Compared with thee? Why, they are like the twinkling stars compared with the glorious Queen of Night. What did I say?—that at nineteen thou wouldst be a miracle of beauty? Nay, that time hath come already! I love thee, child! I love thee, I say, ten times as much as ever I loved thee before!'

He gasped, and then breathed hard; but still he held me fast.

'Idle compliments cost a man nothing, Benjamin. Say what you meant to say and let me go. If you hold me any longer I

will cry out and bring your father to learn the reason.'

'Well,' he said, 'I will not keep thee. I have said what I wanted to say. My time hath not yet arrived. I am shortly to be called, and shall then begin to practise. When I come back here again, 'twill be with a ring in one hand, and in the other the prospect of the Woolsack. Think upon that while I am gone. "Your Ladyship" is finer than plain "Madam," and the Court is more delightful than a village green among the pigs and ducks. Think upon it well: thou art a lucky girl: a plain village girl to be promoted to a coronet! However, I have no fears for thee; thou wilt adorn the highest fortune. Thou wilt be worthy of the great place whither I shall lead thee. What? Is Sir George Jeffreys a better man than I? Is he of better family? Had he better interest? Is he a bolder man? Not so. Yet was Sir George a Common Serjeant at twenty-three, and Recorder at thirty; Chief Justice of Chester at thirty-two. What he hath done

I can do. Moreover, Sir George hath done me the honour to admit me to his company, and will advance me. This he hath promised, both in his cups and when he is sober. Think it over, child : a ring in one hand and a title in the other.'

So Benjamin went away again. I was afraid when I thought of him and his promise, because I knew him of old ; and his eyes were as full of determination as when he would fight a lad of his own age and go on fighting till the other had had enough. Yet he could not marry me against my will. His own father would protect me, to say nothing of mine.

I should have told him then—as I had told him before—that I would never marry him. Then, perhaps, he would have been shaken in his purpose. The very thought of marrying him filled me with terror unspeakable. I was afraid of him not only because he was so masterful—nay, women like a man to be strong of will—but because he had no religion in him and lived like an Atheist, if

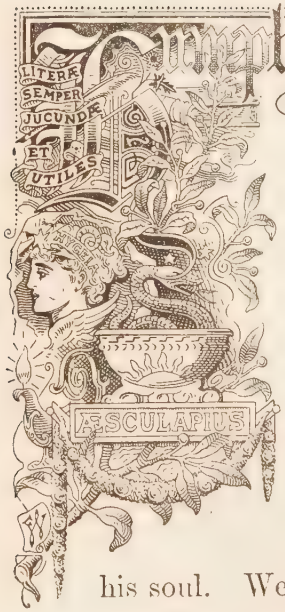
such a wretch there be; at all events, with unconcern about his soul; and because his life was profligate, his tastes were gross, and he was a drinker of much wine. Even at the Manor House I had seen him at supper drinking until his cheeks were puffed out and his voice grew thick. What kind of happiness would there be for a wife whose husband has to be carried home by his varlets too heavy with drink to stand or to speak?

Alas! there is one thing which girls, happily, do never apprehend. They cannot understand how it is possible for a man to become so possessed with the idea of their charms (which they hold themselves as of small account, knowing how fleeting they are, and of what small value) that he will go through fire and water for that woman; yea, and break all the commandments, heedless of his immortal soul, rather than suffer another man to take her—and that, even though he knows that the poor creature loves him not, or loves another man. If maidens knew this, I think that they would go in fear and trembling lest

they should be coveted by some wild beast in human shape, and prove the death of the gallant gentleman whom they would choose for their lover. Or they would make for themselves convents and hide in them, so great would be their fear. But it is idle to speak of this, because, say what one will, girls can never understand the power and the vehemence of love, when once it hath seized and doth thoroughly possess a man.

CHAPTER VII.

MEDICINÆ DOCTOR.



Humphrey did not, like Benjamin, brag of the things he would do when he should go forth to the world. Nevertheless, he thought much about his future, and frequently he discoursed with me about the life that he fain would lead. A young man, I think, wants someone with whom he may speak freely concerning the thoughts which fill his soul. We who belong to the sex which receives but does not create or invent, which profits by man's good work, and suffers from

the evil which he too often does, have no such thoughts and ambitions.

'I cannot,' he would say, 'take upon me holy orders, as Mr. Boscorel would have me, promising, in my cousin Robin's name, this living after his death, because, though I am in truth a mere pauper and dependent, there are in me none of those prickings of the spirit which I could interpret into a Divine call for the ministry; next, because I cannot in conscience swear to obey the Thirty-nine Articles while I still hold that the Nonconformist way of worship is more consonant with the Word of God. And, again, I am of opinion that the Law of Moses, which forbade any but a well-formed man from serving at the altar, hath in it something eternal. It denotes that as no cripple may serve at the earthly altar, so in heaven, of which the altar is an emblem, all those who dwell therein shall be perfect in body as in soul. What, then, is such a one as myself, who hath some learning and no fortune, to do? Sir Christopher, my benefactor, will maintain me at

Oxford until I have taken a degree. This is more than I could have expected. Therefore, I am resolved to take a degree in medicine. It is the only profession fit for a mis-shapen creature. They will not laugh at me when I alleviate their pains.'

'Could anyone laugh at you, Humphrey?'

'Pray Heaven, I frighten not the ladies at the first aspect of me.' He laughed, but not with merriment; for, indeed, a cripple or a hunchback cannot laugh mirthfully over his own misfortune. 'Some men speak scornfully of the profession,' he went on. 'The great French playwright, Monsieur Molière, doth make the physicians the butt and laughing-stock of all Paris. Yet consider. It is medicine which prolongs our days and relieves our pains. Before the science was studied, the wretch who caught a fever in the marshy forest lay down and died; an ague lasted all one's life; a sore throat putrefied and killed; a rheumatism threw a man upon the bed from which he would never rise. The physician is man's chief friend. If our Sovereigns

studied the welfare of humanity as deeply as the art of war, they would maintain, at vast expense, great colleges of learned men continually engaged in discovering the secrets of nature—the causes and the remedies of disease. What better use can a man make of his life than to discover one—only one—secret which will drive away part of the agony of disease? The Jews, more merciful than the Romans, stupefied their criminals after they were crucified; they died, indeed, but their sufferings were less. So the physician, though in the end all men must die, may help them to die without pain. Nay, I have even thought that we might devise means of causing the patient by some potent drug to fall into so deep a sleep that even the surgeon's knife shall not cause him to awaken.'

He therefore, before he entered at Oxford, read with my father many learned books of the ancients on the science and practice of medicine, and studied botany with the help of such books as he could procure.

Some men have but one side to them—

that is to say, the only active part of them is engaged in but one study ; the rest is given up to rest or indolence. Thus Benjamin studied law diligently, but nothing else. Humphrey, for his part, read his Galen and his Celsus, but he neglected not the cultivation of those arts and accomplishments in which Mr. Boscorel was as ready a teacher as he was a ready scholar. He thus learned the history of painting, and sculpture, and architecture, and that of coins and medals, so that at eighteen Humphrey might already have set up as a virtuoso.

Nor was this all. Still by the help of the Rector, he learned the use of the pencil and the brush, and could both draw prettily, or paint in water colours, whether the cottages or the church, the cows in the fields, or the woods and hills. I have many pictures of his painting which he gave me from time to time. And he could play sweetly, whether on the spinnet, or the violin, or the guitar, spending many hours every week with Mr. Boscorel playing duettos together ; and willingly he

would sing, having a rich and full voice very delightful to hear. When I grew a great girl, and had advanced far enough, I was permitted to play with them. There was no end to the music which Mr. Boscorel possessed. First, he had a great store of English ditties such as country people love—as, 'Sing all a green willow,' 'Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,' or 'Once I loved a maiden fair.' There was nothing rough or rude in these songs, though I am informed that much wickedness is taught by the ribald songs that are sung in playhouses and coffee-rooms. And when we were not playing or singing, Mr. Boscorel would read us poetry—portions from Shakspeare or Ben Jonson, or out of Milton's 'Paradise Lost'; or from Herrick, who is surely the sweetest poet that ever lived, 'yet marred,' said Mr. Boscorel, 'by his coarseness and corruption.' Now, one day, after we had been thus reading —one winter afternoon, when the sun lay upon the meadows—Humphrey walked home with me, and on the way confessed, with many blushes, that he, too, had been writing verses.

And with that he lugged a paper out of his pocket.

'They are for thine own eyes only,' he said. 'Truly, my dear, thou hast the finest eyes in the world. They are for no other eyes than thine,' he repeated. 'Not for Robin, mind, lest he laugh: poetry hath in it something sacred, so that even the writer of bad verses cannot bear to have them laughed at. When thou art a year or two older thou wilt understand that they were written for thy heart as well as for thine eyes. Yet, if thou like the verses, they may be seen by Mr. Boscorel, but in private; and if he laugh at them do not tell me. Yet, again, one would like to know what he said; wherefore, tell me, though his words be like a knife in my side.'

Thus he wavered between wishing to show them to his master in art, and fearing.

In the end, when I showed them to Mr. Boscorel, he said that, for a beginner, they were very well—very well, indeed; that the rhymes were correct, and the metre true; that years and practice would give greater firmness,

and that the crafty interlacing of thought and passion, which was the characteristic of Italian verse, could only be learned by much reading of the Italian poets. More he said, speaking upon the slight subject of rhyme and poetry with as much seriousness and earnestness as if he were weighing and comparing texts of Scripture.

Then he gave me back the verses with a sigh.

'Child,' he said, 'to none of us is given what most we desire. For my part, I longed in his infancy that my son should grow up even as Humphrey, as quick to learn; with as true a taste; with as correct an ear; with a hand as skilful. But—— you see, I complain not, though Benjamin loves the noisy tavern better than the quiet coffee-house where the wits resort. To him such things as verses, art, and music are foolishness. I say that I complain not; but I would to Heaven that Humphrey were my own, and that his shoulders were straight, poor lad! Thy father hath made him a Puritan: he is such as John

Milton in his youth—and as beautiful in face as that stout Republican. I doubt not that we shall have from the hand of Humphrey, if he live and prosper, something fine, the nature of which, whether it is to be in painting, or in music, or in poetry, I know not. Take the verses, and take care that thou lose them not; and, child—remember—the poet is allowed to say what he pleases about a woman's eyes. Be not deceived into thinking——But no—no—there is no fear. Good-night, thou sweet and innocent saint.'

I knew not then what he meant; but these are the verses, and I truly think that they are very moving and religious. For if woman be truly the most beautiful work of the Creator (which all men aver), then it behoves her all the more still to point upwards. I read them with a pleasure and surprise that filled my whole soul, and inflamed my heart with pious joy :—

> Around, above, and everywhere
> The earth hath many a lovely thing;
> The zephyrs soft, the flowers fair,
> The babbling brook, the bubbling spring.

The grey of dawn, the azure sky,
The sunset glow, the evening gloom ;
The warbling thrush, the skylark high,
The blossoming hedge, the garden's bloom.

The sun in state, the moon in pride,
The twinkling stars in order laid ;
The winds that ever race and ride,
The shadows flying o'er the glade.

Oh ! many a lovely thing hath earth,
To charm the eye and witch the soul ;
Yet one there is of passing worth—
For that one thing I give the whole.

The crowning work, the last thing made,
Creation's masterpiece to be—
Bend o'er yon stream, and, there displayed,
This wondrous thing reflected see.

Behold a face for heaven designed ;
See how those eyes thy soul betray—
Love—secret love—there sits enshrined ;
And upwards still doth point the way.

When Humphrey went away, he did not, like Benjamin, come blustering and declaring that he would marry me, and that he would break the skull of any other man who dared make love to me—not at all ; Humphrey,

with tears in his eyes, told me that he was sorry I could not go to Oxford as well ; that he was going to lose the sweetest companion in the world ; and that he should always love me ; and then he kissed me on the forehead, and so departed. Why should he not always love me ? I knew very well that he loved me, and that I loved him. Although he was so young, being only seventeen when he was entered at Exeter College, I suppose there never was a young gentleman went to the University of Oxford with so many accomplishments, and so much learning. By my father's testimony he read Greek as if it were his mother tongue, and he wrote and conversed easily in Latin ; and you have heard what arts and accomplishments he added to this solid learning. He was elected to a scholarship at his college, that of Exeter, and, after he took his degree as Bachelor of Medicine, he was made a Fellow of All Souls, where Mr. Boscorel himself had also been a Fellow. This election was not only a great distinction for him, but it gave him what a learned young

man especially desires—the means of living and of pursuing his studies.

While he was at Oxford he wrote letters to Sir Christopher, to Mr. Boscorel, and to my father (to whom also he sent such new books and pamphlets as he thought would interest him). To me he sent sometimes drawings and sometimes books, but never verses.

Now (to make an end of Humphrey for the present), when he had obtained his fellowship, he asked for and obtained leave of absence and permission to study medicine in those great schools which far surpass, they say, our English schools of medicine. These are that of Montpellier; the yet more famous school of Padua, in Italy; and that of Leyden, whither many Englishmen have resorted for study, notably Mr. Evelyn, whose book called 'Sylva' was in the Rector's library.

He carried on during the whole of this time a correspondence with Mr. Boscorel on the paintings, statues, and architecture to be seen wherever his travels carried him. These letters Mr. Boscorel read aloud, with a map

spread before him, discoursing on the history of the place and the chief things to be seen there, before he began to read. Surely there never was a man so much taken up with the fine arts, especially as they were practised by the ancients.

There remains the last of the boys—Robin, Sir Christopher's grandson and heir. I should like this book to be all about Robin—yet one must needs speak of the others. I declare, that from the beginning, there never was a boy more happy, more jolly ; never anyone more willing to be always making someone happy. He loved the open air, the wild creatures, the trees, the birds, everything that lives beneath the sky ; yet not—like my poor brother Barnaby—a hater of books. He read all the books which told about creatures, or hunting, or country life ; and all voyages and travels. A fresh-coloured, wholesome lad, not so grave as Humphrey, nor so rustic as Barnaby, who always seemed to carry with him the scent of woods and fields. He was to Sir Christopher what Benjamin was to

Jacob. Even my father loved him though he was so poor a scholar.

Those who stay at home have homely wits: that is well known: therefore Robin must follow Humphrey to Oxford. He went thither the year after his cousin. I never learned that he obtained a scholarship, or that he was considered one of the younger pillars of that learned and ancient University; or, indeed, that he took a degree at all.

After he left Oxford, he must go to London, there to study Justice's Law and fit himself for the duties he would have to fulfil. Also his grandfather would have him acquire some knowledge of the Court and the City, and the ways of the great and the rich. This, too, he did; though he never learned to prefer those ways to the simple customs and habits of his Somerset village.

He, too, like the other two, bade me a tender farewell.

'Poor Alice!' he said, taking both my hands in his, 'What wilt thou do when I am gone?'

Indeed, since Humphrey went away, we had been daily companions; and at the thought of being thus left alone the tears were running down my cheeks.

'Why, Sweetheart,' he said, 'to think that I should ever make thee cry—I who desire nothing but to make thee always laugh and be happy! What wilt thou do? Go often to my mother. She loves thee as if thou wert her own daughter. Go and talk to her concerning me. It pleaseth the poor soul to be still talking of her son. And forget not my grandfather; play backgammon with him; fill his pipe for him; sing to the spinnet for him; talk to him about Humphrey and me. And forget not Mr. Boscorel, my uncle. The poor man looks as melancholy since Humphrey went away as a turtle robbed of her nest. I saw him yesterday opening one of his drawers full of medals, and he sighed over them fit to break his heart. He sighed for Humphrey, not for Ben. Well, child, what more? Take Lance'—'twas his dog—'for a run every day; make George Sparrow keep an eye upon the

stream for otters ; and—there are a thousand things, but I will write them down. Have patience with the dear old man when he will be still talking about me.'

'Patience, Robin,' I said. 'Why, we all love to talk about thee.'

'Do you all love to talk about me? Dost thou, too, Alice? Oh, my dear, my dear!' Here he took me in his arms and kissed me on the lips. 'Dost thou also love to talk about me? Why, my dear, I shall think of nothing but of thee. Because—oh, my dear! —I love thee with all my heart.'

Well, I was still so foolish that I understood nothing more than that we all loved him, and he loved us all.

'Alice, I will write letters to thee. I will put them in the packet for my mother. Thus thou wilt understand that I am always thinking of thee.'

He was as good as his word. But the letters were so full of the things he was doing and seeing, that it was quite clear that his mind had plenty of room for more than one

object. To be sure, I should have been foolish, indeed, had I desired that his letters should tell me that he was always thinking about me, when he should have been attending to his business.

After a year in London, his grandfather thought that he should travel. Therefore, he went abroad and joined Humphrey at Montpellier, and with him rode northwards to Leyden, where he sojourned while his cousin attended the lectures of that famous school.

CHAPTER VIII.

A ROYAL PROGRESS.

WHEN all the boys were gone the time was quiet, indeed, for those who were left behind. My mother's wheel went spinning still, but I think that some kindness on the part of Mr. Boscorel as well as Sir Christopher caused her weekly tale of yarn to be of less importance. And as for me, not only would she never suffer me to sit at the spinning-wheel, but there was so much request of me (to replace the boys) that I was nearly all the day either with Sir Christopher, or with Madam, or with Mr. Boscorel.

Up to the year 1680, or thereabouts, I paid no more attention to political matters than any young woman with no knowledge may be

supposed to give. Yet, of course, I was on the side of liberty, both civil and religious. How should that be otherwise, my father being such as he was, muzzled for all these years, the work of his life prevented and destroyed?

It was in that year, however, that I became a most zealous partisan and lover of the Protestant cause in the way that I am about to relate.

Everybody knows that there is no part of Great Britain (not even Scotland) where the Protestant religion hath supporters more stout and staunch than Somerset and Devonshire. I hope I shall not be accused of disloyalty to Queen Anne, under whom we now flourish and are happy, when I say that in the West of England we had grown—I know not how—to regard the late misguided Duke of Monmouth as the champion of the Protestant faith. When, therefore, the Duke came into the West of England in the year 1680, five years before his rebellion, he was everywhere received with acclamations and by

crowds who gathered round him to witness their loyalty to the Protestant faith. They came also to gaze upon the gallant commander who had defeated both the French and the Dutch, and was said (but erroneously) to be as wise as he was brave, and as religious as he was beautiful to look upon. As for his wisdom, those who knew him best have since assured the world that he had little or none, his judgment being always swayed and determined for him by crafty and subtle persons seeking their own interests. And as for his religion, whatever may have been his profession, good works were wanting—as is now very well known. But at that time, and among our people, the wicked ways of Courts were only half understood. And there can be no doubt that, whether he was wise or religious, the show of affection, with which the Duke was received upon this journey, turned his head and caused him to think that these people would rally round him if he called upon them. And I suppose that there is nothing which more delights a Prince than to

believe that his friends are ready even to lay down their lives in his behalf.

At that time the country was greatly agitated by anxiety concerning the succession. Those who were nearest the throne knew that King Charles was secretly a Papist. We in the country had not learned that dismal circumstance; yet we knew the religion of the Duke of York. Thousands there were, like Sir Christopher himself, who now lamented the return of the King, considering the disgraces which had fallen upon the country. But what was done could not be undone. They, therefore, asked themselves if the nation would suffer an avowed Papist to ascend a Protestant throne. If not, what should be done? And here, as everybody knows, was opinion divided. For some declared that the Duke of Monmouth, had he his rights, was the lawful heir; and others maintained, on the King's own words, that he was never married to Mistress Lucy Waters. Therefore, they would have the Duke of York's daughter, a Protestant Princess,

married to William of Orange, proclaimed Queen. The Monmouth party were strong, however, and it was even said—Mr. Henry Clark, minister of Crewkerne, wrote a pamphlet to prove it—that a poor woman, Elizabeth Parcet by name, touched the Duke (he being ignorant of the thing) for King's Evil, and was straightway healed. Sir Christopher laughed at the story, saying that the King himself, whether he was descended from a Scottish Stuart or from King Solomon himself, could no more cure that dreadful disease than the seventh son of a seventh son (as some foolish people believe), or the rubbing of the part affected by the hand of a man that had been hanged (as others do foolishly believe), which is the reason why on the gibbets the hanging corpses are always handless.

It was noised abroad, beforehand, that the Duke was going to ride through the West Country in order to visit his friends. The progress (it was more like a Royal progress than the journey of a private nobleman) began with his visit to Mr. Thomas Thynne, of Long-

leat House. It is said that his chief reason for going to that house was to connect himself with the obligation of the tenant of Longleat to give the King and his suite a night's lodging when they visited that part of the country. Mr. Thynne, who entertained the Duke on this occasion, was the same who was afterwards murdered in London by Count Konigsmark. They called him 'Tom of Ten Thousand.' The poet Dryden hath written of this progress, in that poem wherein, under the fabled name of Absalom, he figures the Duke :—

> He now begins his progress to ordain,
> With chariots, horsemen, and a numerous train.
> Fame runs before him as the morning star,
> And shouts of joy salute him from afar.
> Each house receives him as a guardian god,
> And consecrates the place of his abode.

It was for his hospitable treatment of the Duke that Mr. Thynne was immediately afterwards deprived of the command of the Wiltshire Militia.

'Son-in-law,' said Sir Christopher, 'I would ride out to meet the Duke in respect to

his Protestant professions. As for any pretensions he may have to the succession, I know nothing of them.

'I will ride with you, Sir,' said the Rector, 'to meet the son of the King. And as for any Protestant professions, I know nothing of them. His Grace still remains, I believe, within the pale of the Church as by law established. Let us all ride out together.'

Seeing that my father also rode with them, it is certain that there were many and diverse reasons why so many thousands gathered together to welcome the Duke. Madame, Robin's mother, out of her kind heart, invited me to accompany her, and gave me a white frock to wear and blue ribbons to put into it.

We made, with our servants, a large party. We were also joined by many of the tenants, with their sons and wives, so that when we came to Ilchester, Sir Christopher was riding at the head of a great company of sixty or more, and very fine they looked, all provided with blue favours in honour of the Duke.

From Bradford Orcas to Ilchester is but

six miles as the crow flies, but the ways (which are narrow and foul in winter) do so wind and turn about that they add two miles at least to the distance. Fortunately the season was summer—namely, August—when the sun is hottest and the earth is dry, so that no one was bogged on the way.

We started betimes—namely, at six in the morning—because we knew not for certain at what time the Duke would arrive at Ilchester. When we came forth from the Manor House the farmers were already waiting for us, and so, after greetings from his Honour, they fell in and followed. We first took the narrow and rough lane which leads to the high road ; but, when we reached it, we found it full of people riding, like ourselves, or trudging, staff in hand, all in the same direction. They were going to gaze upon the Protestant Duke, who, if he had his way, would restore freedom of conscience, and abolish the Acts against the Nonconformists. We rode through Marston Magna, but only the old people and the little children were left there ; in the fields the ripe corn

stood waiting to be cut; in the farmyards the beasts were standing idle; all the hinds were gone to Ilchester to see the Duke. And I began to fear lest when we got to Ilchester we should be too late. At Marston we left the main road and entered upon a road (call it a track rather than a road) across the country, which is here flat and open. In winter it is miry and boggy, but it was now dry and hard. This path brought us again to the main road in two miles, or thereabouts, and here we were but a mile or so from Ilchester. Now, such a glorious sight as awaited us here I never expected to see. Once again, after five years, I was to see a welcome still more splendid; but nothing can ever efface from my memory that day. For first, the roads, as I have said, were thronged with rustics, and next, when we rode into the town we found it filled with gentlemen most richly dressed, and ladies so beautiful, and with such splendid attire, that it dazzled my eyes to look upon them. It was a grand thing to see the gentlemen take off their hats and cry, 'Huzza for brave Sir

Christopher!' Everybody knew his opinions and on what side he had fought in the Civil War. The old man bent his head, and I think that he was pleased with this mark of honour.

The town which, though ancient, is now decayed and hath but few good houses in it, was made glorious with bright-coloured cloths, carpets, flags, and ribbons. There were bands of music; the bells of the church were ringing; the main street was like a fair with booths and stalls, and in the market-place there were benches set up with white canvas covering, where sat ladies in their fine dresses, some of them with naked necks, unseemly to behold. Yet it was pretty to see the long curls lying on their white shoulders. Some of them sat with half-closed eyes, which, I have since learned, is the fashion at Court. Mostly, they wore satin petticoats, and demi-gowns also of satin, furnished with a long train. Our place was beside the old Cross with its gilt ball and vane. The people who filled the streets came from Sherborne, from Bruton, from Shepton, from Glastonbury, from Langport, and from

Somerton, and from all the villages round. It was computed that there were twenty thousand of them. Two thousand at least rode out to meet the Duke, and followed after him when he rode through the town. And, oh! the shouting as he drew near, the clashing of the bells, the beating of the drums, the blowing of the horns, the firing of the guns, as if the more noise they made the greater would be the Duke.

Since that day I have not wondered at the power which a Prince hath of drawing men after him, even to the death. Never was heir to the Crown received with such joy and welcome as was this young man, who had no title to the Crown, and was base-born. Yet, because he was a brave young man, and comely above all other young men, gracious of speech, and ready with a laugh and a joke, and because he was the son of the King, and the reputed champion of the Protestant faith, the people could not shout too loud for him.

The Duke was at this time in the prime of manhood, being thirty-five years of age. 'At

that age,' Mr. Boscorel used to say, 'one would desire to remain if the body of clay were immortal. For then the volatile humours of youth have been dissipated. The time of follies has passed; love is regarded with the sober eyes of experience; knowledge has been acquired; skill of eye and hand has been gained, if one is so happy as to be a follower of art and music; wisdom hath been reached, if wisdom is ever to be attained. But wisdom,' he would add, 'is a quality generally lacking at every period of life.'

'When last I saw the Duke,' he told us while we waited, 'was fifteen years ago, in St. James's Park. He was walking with the King, his father, who had his arm about his son's shoulders, and regarded him fondly. At that time he was, indeed, a very David for beauty. I suppose that he hath not kept that singular loveliness which made him the darling of the Court. That, indeed, were not a thing to be desired or expected. He is now the hero of Maestricht, and the Chancellor of Cambridge University.'

And then all hats were pulled off, and the ladies waved their handkerchiefs, and the men shouted, and you would have thought the bells would have pulled the old tower down with the vehemence of their ringing; for the Duke was riding into the town.

He was no longer a beautiful boy, but a man at whose aspect every heart was softened. His enemies, in his presence, could not blame him; his friends, at sight of him, could not praise him, of such singular beauty was he possessed. Softness, gentleness, kindness, and goodwill reigned in his large soft eyes: graciousness sat upon his lips, and all his face seemed to smile as he rode slowly between the lane formed by the crowd on either hand.

What said the Poet Dryden in that same poem of his from which I have already quoted?—

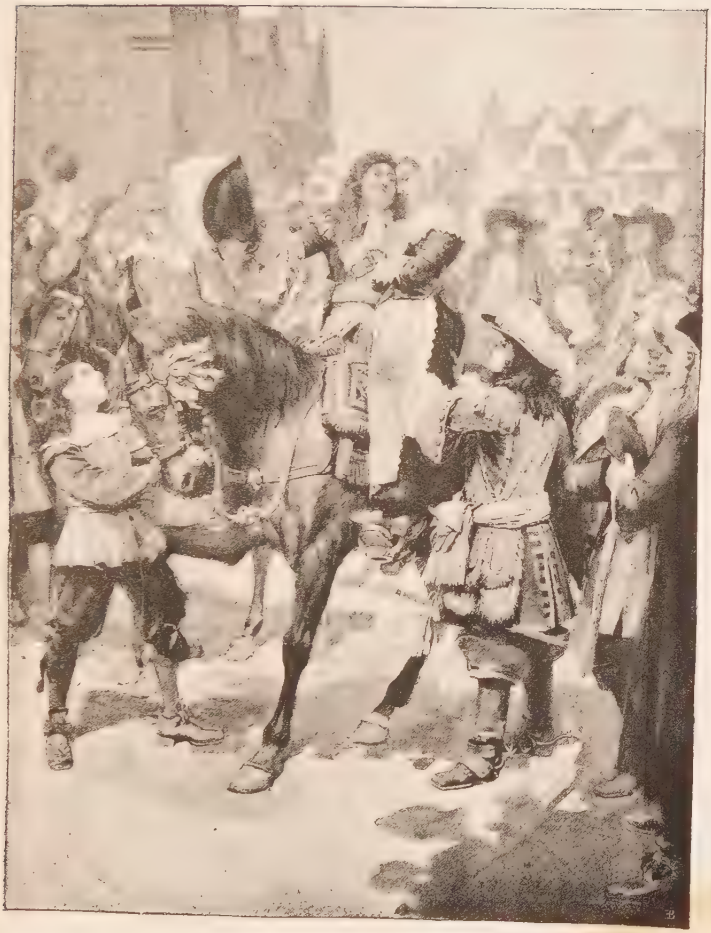
> Early in foreign fields he won renown
> With Kings and States allied to Israel's crown;
> In peace the thoughts of war he could remove,
> And seemed as he were only born for love.

> Whate'er he did was done with so much ease,
> In him alone 'twas natural to please ;
> His motions all accompanied with grace,
> And Paradise was opened in his face.

Now I have to tell of what happened to me — the most insignificant person in the whole crowd. It chanced that as the Duke came near the spot beside the Cross where we were standing, the press in front obliged him to stop. He looked about him while he waited, smiling still and bowing to the people. Presently his eyes fell upon me, and he whispered a gentleman who rode beside him, yet a little in the rear. This gentleman laughed and dismounted. What was my confusion when he advanced towards me and spoke to me!

'Madam,' he said, calling me 'Madam'! 'His Grace would say one word to you, with permission of your friends.'

'Go with this gentleman, child,' said Sir Christopher, laughing. Everybody laughs—I know not why—when a girl is led out to be kissed.



'Fair White Rose of Somerset, let me be assured by a kiss from your sweet lips.'

'Fair White Rose of Somerset,' said his Grace—'twas the most musical voice in the world, and the softest. 'Fair White Rose'—he repeated the words—'let me be assured of the welcome of Ilchester by a kiss from your sweet lips, which I will return in token of my gratitude.'

All the people who heard these words shouted as if they would burst themselves asunder. And the gentleman who had led me forth lifted me so that my foot rested on the Duke's boot, while his Grace laid his arm tenderly round my waist and kissed me twice.

'Sweet child,' he said 'what is thy name?'

'By your Grace's leave,' I said, the words being very strange, 'my name is Alice. I am the daughter of Dr. Comfort Eykin, an ejected minister. I have come with Sir Christopher Challis, who stands yonder.'

'Sir Christopher!' said the Duke, as if surprised. 'Let me shake hands with Sir Christopher. I take it kindly, Sir Christopher,

that you have so far honoured me.' So he gave the old man, who stepped forward bareheaded, his hand, still holding me by the waist. 'I pray that we may meet again, Sir Christopher, and that before long.' Then he drew a gold ring, set with an emerald, from his forefinger, and placed it upon mine, 'God grant it bring thee luck, sweet child,' he said, and kissed me again, and then suffered me to be lifted down. And you may be sure that it was with red cheeks that I took my place among my friends. Yet Sir Christopher was pleased at the notice taken of him by the Duke, and my father was not displeased at the part I had been made to play.

When the Duke had ridden through the town, many of the people followed after, as far as White Lackington, which is close to Ilminster. So many were they that they took down a great piece of the park paling to admit them all ; and there, under a Spanish chestnut-tree, the Duke drank to the health of all the people.

At Ilminster, whither he rode a few days

later ; at Chard, at Ford Abbey, at Colyton, and at Exeter—wherever he went, he was received with the same shouts and acclamations. It is no wonder, therefore, that he should believe, a few years later, that those people would follow him when he drew the sword for the Protestant religion.

One thing is certain—that in the West of England from the progress of Monmouth to the Rebellion, there was uneasiness, with an anxious looking forward to troubled times. The people of Taunton kept as a day of holiday and thanksgiving the anniversary of the raising of Charles's siege. When the Mayor, in 1683, tried to stop the celebration, they nearly stoned him to death. After this, Sir George Jeffreys, afterwards Lord Jeffreys, who took the spring circuit in 1684, was called upon to report on the loyalty of the West Country. He reported that the gentry were loyal and well disposed. But he knew not the mind of the weavers and spinners of the country.

It was this progress ; the sight of the

Duke's sweet face ; his flattery of me, and his soft words, and the ring he gave me, which made me from that moment such a partisan of his cause as only a woman can be. Women cannot fight, but they can encourage those who do ; and they can not only ardently desire, but they can despise and contemn those who think otherwise. I cannot say that it was I who persuaded our boys five years later to join the Duke ; but I can truly say that I did and said all that a woman can ; that I rejoiced when they did so ; and that I should never have forgiven Robin had he joined the forces of the Papist King.

CHAPTER IX.

WITH THE ELDERS.

So we went home again, all well pleased, and I holding the Duke's ring tight, I promise you. It was a most beautiful ring when I came to look at it; a great emerald was in the midst of it, with little pearls and emeralds set alternately around it. Never was such a grand gift to so humble a person. I tied it to a black ribbon and put it in the box which held my clothes. But sometimes I could not forbear the pleasure of wearing it round my neck, secretly; not for

the joy of possessing the ring so much as for remembering the lovely face and the gracious words of the giver.

At that time I was in my sixteenth year, but well grown for my age. Like my father, I was above the common stature and taller than most. We continued for more than four years longer to live without the company of the boys, which caused me to be much in the society of my elders, and as much at the Manor House and the Rectory as at home. At the former place Sir Christopher loved to have me with him all day long, if my mother would suffer it; when he walked abroad I must walk with him; when he walked in his garden I must be at his side. When he awoke after his afternoon sleep he liked to see me sitting ready to talk to him. I must play to him and sing to him; or I must bring out the backgammon board; or I must read the last letters from Robin and Humphrey. Life is dull for an old man whose friends are mostly dead, unless he have the company of the young. So David in his old age took to himself a young wife.

I have sometimes thought that he would have done better to have comforted his heart with the play and prattle of his grandchildren—of whom, I suppose, there must have been many families.

Now, as I was so much with his Honour, I had much talk with him upon things on which wise and ancient men do not often converse with girls, and I was often present when he discoursed with my father or with his son-in-law, the Rector, on high and serious matters. It was a time of great anxiety and uncertainty. There were great Pope burnings in the country; and when some were put in pillory for riot at these bonfires not a hand was lifted against them. They had one at Sherborne on Nov. 17, the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's Coronation day, instead of Nov. 5, Guy Faux Day. Boys went about the streets asking for halfpence and singing—

> Up with the ladder,
> And down with the rope;
> Give us a penny
> To burn the old Pope.

There were riots in Taunton, where the High Church party burned the pulpit of a meeting-house ; people went about openly saying that the Roundheads would soon come back again. From Robin we heard of the Popish Plot, and the flight of the Duke of York, and afterwards of Monmouth's disgrace and exile. At all the market towns where men gathered together they talked of these things, and many whispered together: a thing which Sir Christopher loved not, because it spoke of conspiracies and secret plots, whereas he was all for bold declaration of conscience.

In short, it was an anxious time, and everybody understood that serious things would happen should the King die. There were not wanting, besides, omens of coming ills—if you accept such things as omens or warnings. To Taunton (afterwards the town most affected by the Rebellion) a plain warning was vouchsafed by the rumbling and thundering and shaking of the earth itself, so that dishes were knocked down and cups broken, and plaster shaken off the walls of

houses. And once (this did I myself see with my own eyes) the sun rose with four other suns for companions—a most terrifying sight, though Mr. Boscorel, who spoke learnedly on omens, had an explanation of this miracle, which he said was due to natural causes alone. And at Ile Brewers there was a monstrous birth of two girls with but one body from the breast downwards; their names were Aquila and Priscilla; but I believe they lived but a short time.

I needs must tell of Mr. Boscorel, because he was a man the like of whom I have never since beheld. I believe there can be few men such as he was, who could so readily exchange the world of heat and argument for the calm and dispassionate air of art and music. Even religion (if I may venture to say so) seemed of less importance to him than painting and sculpture. I have said that he taught me to play upon the spinnet. Now that Humphrey was gone, he desired my company every day, in order, he pretended, that I might grow perfect in my performance, but in reality because he was lonely at the Rectory, and

found pleasure in my company. We played together—he upon the violoncello and I upon the spinnet—such music as he chose. It was sometimes grave and solemn music, such as Lulli's 'Miserere' or his 'De Profundis'; sometimes it was some part of a Roman Catholic Mass: then was my soul uplifted and wafted heavenwards by the chords, which seemed prayer and praise fit for the angels to harp before the throne. Sometimes it was music which spoke of human passions, when I would be, in like manner, carried out of myself. My master would watch not only my execution, commending or correcting, but he would also watch the effect of the music upon my mind.

'We are ourselves,' he said, 'like unto the instruments upon which we play. For as one kind of instrument, as the drum, produces but one note; and another, as the cymbals, but a clashing which is in itself discordant, but made effective in a band; so others are, like the most delicate and sensitive violins—those of Cremona—capable of producing the

'We played together, he on the violoncello, I upon the spinnet.'

finest music that the soul of man hath ever devised. It is by such music, child, that some of us mount unto heaven. As for me, indeed, I daily feel more and more that music leadeth the soul upward, and that, as regards the disputations on the Word of God, the letter indeed killeth, but the spirit which music helpeth us to feel—the spirit, I say, giveth life.' He sighed, and drew his bow gently across the first string of his violoncello. ''Tis a time of angry argument. The Word of God is thrown from one to the other as a pebble is shot from a sling. It wearies me. In this room, among these books of music, my soul finds rest, and the spiritual part of me is lifted heavenwards. Humphrey and you, my dear, alone can comprehend this saying. Thou hast a mind like his, to feel and understand what music means. Listen!' Here he executed a piece of music at which the tears rose to my eyes. 'That is from the Romish Mass which we are taught ignorantly to despise. My child, I am, indeed, no Catholic, and I hold that ours is the purer Church;

yet, in losing the Mass we have lost the great music with which the Catholics sustain their souls. Some of our anthems, truly, are good; but what is a single anthem, finished in ten minutes, compared with a grand Mass which lasts three hours ?'

Then he had portfolios filled with engravings, which he would bring forth and contemplate with a kind of rapture, discoursing upon the engraver's art and its difficulties, so that I should not, as is the case with ignorant persons, suppose that these things were produced without much training and skill. He had also boxes full of coins, medals, and transparent gems carved most delicately with heathen gods and goddesses, shepherds and swains, after the ancient fashion, unclothed and unashamed. On these things he would gaze with admiration which he tried to teach me, but could not succeed, because I cannot believe that we may without blame look upon such figures. Nevertheless, they were most beautiful, the hands and faces and the very hair so delicately and exquisitely carved that you

could hardly believe it possible. And he talked solemnly and scholarly of these gauds, as if they were things which peculiarly deserved the attention of wise and learned men. Nay, he would be even lifted out of himself in considering them.

'Child,' he said, 'we know not, and we cannot even guess, the wonders of art that in heaven we shall learn to accomplish'—as if carving and painting were the occupation of angels!—'or the miracles of beauty and of dexterity that we shall be able to design and execute. Here, the hand is clumsy and the brain is dull; we cannot rise above ourselves; we are blind to the beauty with which the Lord hath filled the earth for the solace of human creatures. Nay; we are not even tender with the beauty that we see and love. We suffer maidens sweet as the dreams of poets to waste their beauty unpraised and unsung. I am old, child, or I would praise thee in immortal verse. Much I fear that thou wilt grow old without the praise of sweet numbers. Well; there is no doubt more lasting beauty

of face and figure hereafter to joy the souls of the elect. And thou wilt make his happiness for one man on earth. Pray Heaven, sweet child, that he look also to thine !'

He would say such things with so grand an air, speaking as if his words should command respect, and with so kindly an eye and a soft smile, while he gently stroked the side of his nose, which was long, that I was always carried away with the authority of it, and not till after I left him did I begin to perceive that my father would certainly never allow that the elect should occupy themselves with the frivolous pursuits of painting and the fine arts, but only with the playing of their harps and the singing of praises. It was this consideration which caused him to consent that his daughter should learn the spinnet. I did not tell him (God forgive me for the deceit, if there was any !) that we sometimes played music written for the Mass ; nor did I repeat what Mr. Boscorel said concerning art and the flinging about of the Word of God, because my father was wholly occupied in controversy,

and his principal, if not his only, weapon was the Word of God.

Another pleasure which we had was to follow Humphrey in his travels by the aid of his letters and a mappa mundi, or atlas, which the Rector possessed. Then I remember when we heard that the boys were about to ride together through France, from Montpellier to Leyden in Holland, we had on the table the great map of France. There were many drawings, coats-of-arms, and other pretty things on the map.

'It is now,' said Mr. Boscorel, finding out the place he wanted, and keeping his fore-finger upon it, 'nearly thirty years since I made the grand tour, being then governor to the young Lord Silchester, who afterwards died of the Plague in London. Else had I been now a Bishop, who am forgotten in this little place. The boys will ride, I take it, by the same road which we took: first, because it is the high road and the safest; next, because it is the best provided with inns and resting places; and, lastly, because it passes through

the best part of his Most Christian Majesty's dominions, and carries the traveller through his finest and most stately cities. From Montpellier they will ride—follow my finger, child ! —to Nismes. Before the Revocation it was a great place for those of the Reformed Religion, and a populous town. Here they will not fail to visit the Roman temple which still stands. It is not, indeed, such a noble monument as one may see in Rome ; but it is in good preservation, and a fair example of the later style. They will also visit the great amphitheatre, which should be cleared of the mean houses which are now built up within it, and so exposed in all its vastness to the admiration of the world. After seeing these things they will direct their way across a desolate piece of country to Avignon, passing on the way the ancient Roman aqueduct called the Pont de Gard. At Avignon they will admire the many churches and the walls, and will not fail to visit the palace of the Popes during the Great Schism. Thence they will ride northwards, unless they wish first to see the Roman remains

at Arles. Thence will they proceed up the Valley of the Rhone, through many stately towns, till they come to Lyons, where, doubtless, they will sojourn for a few days. Next, they will journey through the rich country of Burgundy, and from the ancient town of Dijon will reach Paris through the city of Fontainebleau. On the way they will see many noble houses and castles, with rich towns and splendid churches. In no country are there more splendid churches, built in the Gothic style, which we have now forgotten. Some of them, alas ! have been defaced in the wars (so-called of Religion), where, as happened also to us, the delicate carved work, the scrolls and flowers and statues were destroyed, and the painted windows broken. Alas ! that men should refuse to suffer Art to become the minister and handmaid of Religion ! Yet in the first and most glorious temple, in which the glory of the Lord was visibly present, there were carved and graven lilies, with lions, oxen, chariots, cherubim, palm-trees and pomegranates.'

He closed his atlas and sat down.

'Child,' he said, meditating, 'for a scholar, in his youth, there is no pleasure comparable with the pleasure of travelling in strange countries, among the monuments of ancient days. My own son did never, to my sorrow, desire the pleasant paths of learning, and did never show any love for the arts, in which I have always taken so great delight. He desireth rather the companionship of men; he loveth to drink and sing; and he nourisheth a huge ambition. 'Tis best that we are not all alike. Humphrey should have been my son. Forget not, my child, that he hath desired to be remembered to thee in every letter which he hath written.'

If the Rector spoke much of Humphrey, Madam made amends by talking continually of Robin, and of the great things that he would do when he returned home. Justice of the Peace, that he would certainly be made; Captain first and afterwards Colonel in the Somerset Militia, that also should he be; Knight of the Shire, if he were ambitious—

but that I knew he would never be ; High Sheriff of the County, if his slender means permitted—for the estate was not worth more than five or six hundred pounds a year. Perhaps he would marry an heiress : it would be greatly to the advantage of the family if an heiress were to come into it with broad acres of her own ; but she was not a woman who would seek to control her son in the matter of his affections, and if he chose a girl with no fortune to her back, if she was a good girl and pious, Madam would never say him nay. And he would soon return. The boy had been at Oxford and next in London, learning law, such as Justices require. He was now with Humphrey at the University of Leyden, doubtless learning more law.

'My dear,' said Madam, 'we want him home. His grandfather groweth old, though still, thank God ! in the full possession of his faculties. Yet a young man's presence is needed. I trust and pray that he will return as he went, innocent, in spite of the many temptations of the wicked city. And, oh !

child—what if he should have lost his heart to some designing city hussy !'

He came—as you shall hear immediately —Robin came home. Would to God that he had waited, if only for a single month ! Had he not come, all our afflictions would have been spared us ! Had he not come, that good old man, Sir Christopher——but it is vain to imagine what might have been. We are in the hands of the Lord ; nothing that happens to us is permitted but by Him, and for some wise purpose was Sir Christopher in his old age—alas ! why should I anticipate what I have to narrate ?

CHAPTER X.

LE ROY EST MORT.

IN February of the year 1685, King Charles II. died.

Sir Christopher himself brought us the news from Sherborne, whither he had gone, as was his wont, to the weekly ordinary. He clattered up the lane on his cob, and halted at our gate.

'Call thy father, child. Give you good-day, Madam Eykin. Will your husband leave his books and come forth for a moment? Tell him I have news.'

My father rose and obeyed. His gown was in rags; his feet were clad in cloth shoon, which I worked for him; his cheek was wasted; but his eye was keen. He was lean and tall; his hair was as white as Sir

Christopher's, though he was full twenty years younger.

'Friend and gossip,' said Sir Christopher, 'the King is dead.'

'Is Charles Stuart dead?' my father replied. 'He cumbered the earth too long. For five-and-twenty years hath he persecuted the saints. Also he hath burnt incense after the abomination of the heathen. Let his lot be as the lot of Ahaz.'

'Nay; he is buried by this time. His brother the Duke of York hath been proclaimed King.'

'James the Papist. It is as though Manasseh should succeed to Ahaz. And after him Jehoiakim.'

'Yet the bells will ring and we shall pray for the King; and wise men, friend Eykin, will do well to keep silence.'

'There is a time to speak and a time to keep silence. It may be that the time is at hand when a godly man must stretch forth his hand to tear down the Scarlet Woman, though she slay him in the attempt.'

'It may be so, my friend; yet stretch not forth thine hand until thou art well assured of the Divine Command. The King is dead. Now will my son-in-law ring out the bells for the new King, and we shall pray for him, as we prayed for his brother. It is our duty to pray for all in authority, though to the prayers of a whole nation there seemeth, so far as human reason can perceive, no answer.'

'I for one will pray no more for a King who is a Papist. Rather will I pray daily for his overthrow.'

'King Charles is said to have received a priest before he died. Yet it is worse that the King should be an open than a secret Catholic. Let us be patient, my friend, and await the time.'

So he rode up the village, and presently the bells were set a-ringing, and they clashed as joyously, echoing around the Corton Hills, as if the accession of King James II. was the only thing wanted to make the nation prosperous, happy, and religious.

My father stood at the gate after Sir

Christopher left him. The wind was cold, and the twilight was falling, and his cassock was thin, but he remained there motionless, until my mother went out and drew him back to the house by the arm. He went into his own room, but he read no more that day.

In the evening he came forth and sat with us, and while I sat sewing, my mother spinning by the light of the fire, he discoursed, which was unusual with him, upon things and peoples and the best form of Government, which he held to be a Commonwealth, with a strong man for President. But he was to hold his power from the people, and was to lay it down frequently, lest he should in his turn be tempted to become a King. And if he were to fall away from righteousness, or to live in open sin, or to be a merrymaker, or to suffer his country to fall from a high place among the nations, he was to be displaced, and be forced to retire. As for the man Charles, now dead, he would become, my father said, an example to all future ages, and a warning of what may happen when the

doctrine of Divine Right is generally accepted and acted upon ; the King himself being not so much blamed by him as the practice of hereditary rule which caused him to be seated upon the throne, when his true place, my father said, was among the lacqueys and varlets of the palace. 'His brother James,' he added, 'hath now an opportunity such as is given to few—for he may become another Josiah. But I think he will neglect that opportunity,' he concluded ; 'yea, even if Hilkiah the Priest were to bring him a message from Huldah the Prophetess ; for he doth belong to a family which, by the Divine displeasure, can never perceive the truth. Let us now read the Word, and wrestle with the Lord in prayer.'

Next we heard that loyal addresses were poured in from all quarters congratulating the King, and promising most submissive obedience. One would have thought that the people were rejoiced at the succession of a Roman Catholic ; it was said that the King had promised liberty of conscience unto all ;

that he claimed that liberty for himself, and that he went to Mass daily and openly.

But many there were who foresaw trouble. Unfortunately, one of them was Sir Christopher, who spoke his mind at all times too fiercely for his safety. Mr. Boscorel, also, was of opinion that civil war would speedily ensue.

'The King's friends,' he said, 'may for a time buy the support of the Nonconformists, and make a show of religious liberty. Thus may they govern for a while. But it is not in the nature of the Roman Catholic priest to countenance religious liberty, or ever to sit down contented with less than all the pie. They must for ever scheme and intrigue for more power. Religious liberty? It means to them the eternal damnation of those who hold themselves free to think for themselves. They would be less than human if they did not try to save the souls of the people by docking their freedom. They must make this country even as Spain or Italy. Is it to be believed that they will suffer the Church

to retain her revenues, or the universities to remain out of their control? Nay, will they allow the grammar schools to be in the hands of Protestants? Never! The next generation will be wholly Catholic, unless the present generation send King and priests packing.'

These were treasonable words, but they were uttered in the hall of the Manor House with no other persons present than Sir Christopher and the Rector himself.

'Seeing these things, son-in-law,' said Sir Christopher, 'what becomes of Right Divine? Where is the duty of Non-Resistance?'

'The doctrine of Right Divine,' said Mr. Boscorel, rubbing his nose, 'includes the Divine institution of a Monarchy, which, I confess, is manifestly untenable, because the Lord granted a King to the people only because they clamoured for one. Also, had the institution been of Divine foundation, the Jews would never have been allowed to live under the rule of Judges, Tetrarchs, and Roman Governors.'

'You have not always spoken so plainly,' said Sir Christopher.

'Nay; why be always proclaiming to the world your thoughts and opinions? Besides, even if the doctrine of Non-Resistance were sound, there may be cases in which just laws may be justly set aside. I say not that this is one, as yet. But if there were danger of the ancient superstitions being thrust upon us to the destruction of our souls, I say not that we should meekly sit down. Nay; if a starving man take a loaf of bread, there being no other way possible to save his life, one would not, therefore, hold him a thief. Yet the law remains.'

'Shall the blood which hath been poured out for the cause of liberty prove to be shed in vain?' asked Sir Christopher.

'Why, Sir,' said the Rector, 'the same question might be asked in France, where the Protestants fought longer and against greater odds than we in this country. Yet the blood of those martyrs hath been shed, so far as man can see, in vain; the Church of Rome

is there the conqueror indeed. It is laid upon the Protestants, even upon us, who hold that we are a true branch of the ancient Apostolic Church, to defend ourselves continually against an enemy who is always at unity, always guided by one man, always knows what he wants, and is always working to get it. We, on the other hand, do not know our own minds, and must for ever be quarrelling among ourselves. Nevertheless, the heart of the country is Protestant; and sooner or later the case of conscience may arise whether—the law remaining unchanged—we may not blamelessly break the law?'

That case of conscience was not yet ripe for consideration. There needed first many things—including the martyrdom of saints and innocent men and poor, ignorant rustics—before the country roused herself once more to seize her liberties. Then as to that poor doctrine of Divine Right, they all made a mouthful of it, except only a small and harmless band of Nonjurors.

At the outset, whatever the opinions of

the people—who could have been made to rise as one man—the gentry remained loyal. Above all things, they dreaded another civil war.

'We must fain accept the King's professions,' said the Rector. 'If we have misgivings, let us disguise them. Let us rather nourish the hope that they are honestly meant; and let us wait. England will not become another Spain in a single day. Let us wait. The stake is not yet set up in Smithfield, and the Inquisition is not yet established in the country.'

It was in this temper that the King's accession found Sir Christopher. Afterwards he was accused of having harboured designs against the King from the beginning. That, indeed, was not the case. He had no thought of entering into any such enterprise. Yet he never doubted that in the end there would be an uprising against the rule of the priests. Nor did he doubt that the King would be pushed on by his advisers to one pretension after another for the advancement of his own

prerogative and the displacement of the Protestant Church. Nay, he openly predicted that there would be such attempts; and he maintained—such was his wisdom!—that, in the long run, the Protestant faith would be established upon a surer foundation than ever. But as for conspiring or being cognisant of any conspiracy, that was untrue. Why, he was at this time seventy-five years of age—a time when such men as Sir Christopher have continually before their eyes Death and the Judgment.

As for my father, perhaps I am wrong, but in the daily prayers of night and morning, and in the grace before meat, he seemed to find a freer utterance, and to wrestle more vehemently than was his wont on the subject of the Scarlet Woman, offering himself as a willing martyr and confessor, if by the shedding of his blood the great day of her final overthrow might be advanced; yet always humble, not daring to think of himself as anything but an instrument to do the will of his Master. In the end, his death truly helped,

with others, to bring a Protestant King to the Throne of these isles. And since we knew him to be so deep a scholar, always reading and learning, and in no sense a man of activity, the thing which he presently did amazed us all. Yet we ought to have known that one who is under the Divine command to preach the Word of God and hath been silenced by man for more than twenty years, so that the strength of his manhood hath run to waste and is lost—it is a most terrible and grievous thing for a man to be condemned to idleness! —may become like unto one of those burning mountains of which we sometimes read in books of voyages. In him, as in them, the inner fires rage and burn, growing ever stronger and fiercer, until presently they rend asunder the sides of the mountain and burst forth, pouring down liquid fire over the unhappy valleys beneath, with showers of red-hot ashes to destroy and cover up the smiling homesteads and the fertile meadows.

It is true that my father chafed continually at the inaction forced upon him, but his im-

patience was never so strong as at this time, namely, after the accession of King James. It drove him from his books and out into the fields and lanes, where he walked to and fro, waving his long arms, and sometimes crying aloud and shouting in the woods, as if compelled to cry out in order to quench some raging fever or heat of his mind.

About this time, too, I remember, they began to talk of the exiles in Holland. The Duke of Monmouth was there with the Earl of Argyle, and with them a company of firebrands eager to get back to England and their property.

I am certain now that my father (and perhaps through his information, Sir Christopher also) was kept acquainted with the plots and designs that were carried on in the Low Countries. Nay; I am also certain that his informant was none other than Humphrey, who was still in Leyden. I have seen a letter from him, written, as I now understand, in a kind of allegory or parable, in which one thing was said and another meant. Thus, he

pretends to speak of Dutch gardening :— 'The gardeners,' he says, 'take infinite pains that their secrets shall not be learned or disclosed. I know, however, that a certain blue tulip, much desired by many gardeners in England, will be taken across the water this year, and I hope that by next year the precious bulb may be fully planted in English soil. The preparation of the soil necessary for the favourable reception of the bulb is well known to you, and you will understand how to mix your soil and to add manure and so forth. I myself expect to finish what I have to do in a few weeks, when I shall cross to London, and so ride westwards, and hope to pay my respects to my revered tutor in the month of June next. It may be that I shall come with the tulip, but that is not certain. Many messages have been received offering large sums of money for the bulb, so that it is hoped that the Dutch gardeners will let it go.

'From H. C.'

The tulip, in a word, was the Duke of

Monmouth, and the Dutch gardeners were the Scotch and English exiles then in Holland, and the English gardeners were the Duke's friends, and H. C. was Humphrey Challis.

I think that Sir Christopher must have known of this correspondence, because I now remember that my father would sit with him for many hours looking at a map of England, conversing long and earnestly, and making notes in a book. These notes he made in the Arabic character, which no one but himself could read. I therefore suppose that he was estimating the number of Nonconformists who might be disposed to aid in such an enterprise as Humphrey's 'gardeners' were contemplating.

Robin, who certainly was no conspirator, also wrote a letter from Leyden about this time saying that something was expected, nobody knew what; but that the exiles were meeting constantly, as if something was brewing.

It was about the first week of June that

the news came to us of Lord Argyle's landing. This was the beginning. After that, as you will hear, the news came thick and fast; every day something fresh, and something to quicken the most sluggish pulse. To me, at least, it seemed as if the breath of God Himself was poured out upon the country, and that the people were everywhere resolved to banish the accursed thing from their midst. Alas! I was but a simple country maid and I was deceived! The accursed thing was to be driven forth, but not yet. The country party hated the Pope, but they dreaded civil war; and, indeed, there is hardly any excuse for that most dreadful scourge, except the salvation of the soul and the safeguarding of liberties. They would gladly welcome a rising, but it must be general and universal. They had for five-and-twenty years been taught the wickedness of rebellion, and now there was no way to secure the Protestant Faith except by rebellion. Unhappily, the rebellion began before the country gentlemen were ready to begin.

CHAPTER XI.

BEFORE THE STORM.

BEFORE the storm breaks there sometimes falls upon the earth a brief time when the sun shines in splendour from a clear sky, the air is balmy and delightsome, the birds sing in the coppice, and the innocent lambs leap in the meadows. Then, suddenly, dark clouds gather from the north; the wind blows cold; in a minute the sky is black; the lightnings flash, the thunders roll, the wind roars, the hail beats down and strips the orchard of its

promise, and silences the birds cowering in the branches, and drives the trembling sheep to take shelter in the hedges. This was to be my case. You shall understand how for a single day—it was no more—I was the happiest girl in all the world.

I may now without any shame confess that I have always loved Robin, from my earliest childhood. That was no great wonder seeing what manner of boy he was, and how he was always kind and thoughtful for me. We were at first only brother and sister together, which is natural and reasonable when children grow up together; nor can I tell when or how we ceased to be brother and sister, save that it may have been when Robin kissed me so tenderly at parting, and told me that he should always love me. I do not think that brothers do generally protest love and promise continual affection. Barnaby certainly never declared his love for me, nor did he ever promise to love me all his life. Perhaps, had he remained longer, he might have become as tender as he was good-

hearted; but I think that tenderness towards a sister is not in the nature of a boy. I loved Robin, and I loved Humphrey, both as if they were brothers; but one of them ceased to be my brother, while the other, in consequence, remained my brother always.

A girl may be ignorant of the world as I was, and of lovers and their ways as I was, and yet she cannot grow from a child to a woman without knowing that when a young man, who hath promised to love her always, speaks of her in every letter, he means more than common brotherly love. Nor can any woman be indifferent to a man who thus regards her; nor can she think upon love without the desire of being herself loved. Truly, I had always before my eyes the spectacle of that holy love which consecrates every part of life. I mean, in the case of my mother, whose waking and sleeping thoughts were all for her husband, who worked continually and cheerfully with her hands that he might be enabled to study without other work, and gave up her whole life, without grudging—

even reckoning it her happiness and her privilege—in order to provide food and shelter for him. It was enough reward for her that he should sometimes lay his hand lovingly upon her head, or turn his eyes with affection to meet hers.

It was in the night of June 12, as I lay in bed, not yet asleep, though it was already past nine o'clock, that I heard the trampling of hoofs crossing the stream and passing our cottage. Had I known who were riding those horses there would have been but little sleep for me that night. But I knew not, and did not suspect, and so, supposing that it was only one of the farmers belated, I closed my eyes, and presently slept until the morning.

About five o'clock, or a little before that time, I awoke, the sun having already arisen, and being now well up above the hills. I therefore arose softly, leaving my mother asleep still, and, having dressed quickly, and prayed a little, I crept down the stairs. In the house there was such a stillness that I could even hear the regular breathing of my

father as he slept upon his pallet among his books; it was chill and damp (as is the custom in the early morning) in the room where we lived and worked. Yet, when I threw open door and shutter and looked outside, the air was full of warmth and refreshment; as for the birds, they had long since left their nests, and now were busy looking for their breakfast; the larks were singing overhead, and the bees already humming and droning. Who would lie abed when he could get up and enjoy the beauty of the morning? When I had breathed a while, with pleasure and satisfaction, the soft air, which was laden with the scent of flowers and of hay, I went indoors again and swept and dusted the room. Then I opened the cupboard, and considered the provision for breakfast. For my father there would be a slice of cold bacon with a good crust of home-made bread (better bread or sweeter was nowhere to be had) and a cup of cider, warming to the spirits and good, for one who is no longer young, against any rawness of the morning air. For my mother and

myself there would be, as soon as our neighbours' cows were milked, a cup of warm milk and bread soaked in it. 'Tis a breakfast good for a grown person as well as for a child, and it cost us nothing but the trouble of going to take it.

When I had swept the room and laid everything in its place I went into the garden, hoe in hand, to weed the beds and trim the borders. The garden was not very big, it is true, but it produced many things useful for us; notably onions and sallet, besides many herbs good for the house, for it was a fertile strip of ground and planted in every part of it. Now, such was the beauty of the morning and the softness of the air that I presently forgot the work about which I had come into the garden, and sat down in the shade upon a bench, suffering my thoughts to wander hither and thither. Much have I always pitied those poor folk in towns who can never escape from the noise and clatter of tongues and sit somewhere in the sunshine or the shade, while the cattle low in the meadows

and the summer air makes the leaves to rustle, and thus alone suffer their thoughts to wander here and there. Every morning when I arose was this spectacle of Nature's gladness presented to my eyes, but not every morning could my spirit (which sometimes crawls, as if fearing the light of day and the face of the sun) rise to meet and greet it, and to feel it calling aloud for a hymn of praise and thanksgiving. For, indeed, this is a beautiful world, if we could always (which we cannot, for the earthliness of our natures) suffer its loveliness to sink into our hearts. I know not what I thought this morning; but I remember, while I considered the birds, which neither reap nor sow, nor take any thought of to-morrow, yet are daily fed by Heaven, that the words were whispered in mine ear: 'Are ye not much better than they?' And this, without doubt, prepared my heart for what should follow.

While I sat thinking of I know not what, there came footsteps—quick footsteps—along the road; and I knew those footsteps, and

sprang to my feet, and ran to the garden-gate, crying, 'Robin!—it is Robin!'

Yes; it was Robin.

He seized me by both hands, looking in my face curiously and eagerly.

'Alice!' he said, drawing a deep breath, 'Oh! but what hath happened to thee?'

'What should happen, Robin?'

'Oh! Thou art changed, Alice! I left thee almost a child, and now—now—I thought to catch thee in my arms— a sweet rustic nymph—and now—fain must I go upon my knees to a goddess.'

'Robin!' Who, indeed, would have expected such language from Robin?

'Alice,' he said, still gazing upon me with a kind of wonder which made me blush, 'do you remember when we parted four years ago —the words we said? As for me, I have never forgotten them. I was to think of thee always; I was to love thee always. Truly I may say that there is never a day but thou hast been in my mind. But not like this'—— He continued to look upon me as upon some

strange creature, so that I began to be frightened and turned away.

'Nay, Alice, forgive me. I am one who is dazzled by the splendour of the sun. Forgive me; I cannot speak. I thought of a village beauty, rosy-cheeked, sweet and wholesome as an August quarander, and I find'——

'Robin—not a goddess.'

'Well, then, a woman tall and stately, and more beautiful than words can say.'

'Nay, Robin, you do but flatter. That is not like the old Robin I remember and'——— I should have added 'loved,' but the word stuck.

'I swear, sweet saint—if I may swear—nay, then I do affirm, that I do not flatter. Hear me tell a plain tale. I have travelled far since last I saw thee; I have seen the great ladies of the Court both of St. James's and of the Louvre; I have seen the famous beauties of Provence, and the black-eyed witches of Italy; but nowhere have I seen a woman half so fair.'

'Robin—you must not! Nay, Robin—you shame me!'

Then he knelt at my feet and seized my hand and kissed it. Oh, the foolishness of a man in love! And yet it pleases us. No woman is worth it. No woman can understand it; nor can she comprehend the power and might of man's love, nor why he singles out her alone from all the rest and fills his heart wholly with her, so that all other women are henceforward as his sisters. It is wonderful; it is most wonderful. Yet it pleases us. Nay, we cannot choose but thank God for it with all our heart and with all our soul.

I would not, if I could, set down all the things which Robin said. First, because the words of love are sacred; next, because I would not that other women should know the extravagance of his praise. It was in broken words, because love can never be eloquent.

As for me, what could I do, what could I say? For I had loved him from my very

'And Robin was come home again, and I was lying in his arms, and he was kissing me.'

childhood, and now all my heart went out from me and became his. I was all his. I was his slave to command. That is the quality of earthly love by which it most closely resembles the heavenly love, so that just as the godly man is wholly devoted to the will of the Lord in all things great and small, resigned to His chastisements, and always anxious to live and die in His service, so in earthly love one must be wholly devoted to the person whom one loves.

And Robin was come home again, and I was lying in his arms, and he was kissing me and calling me all the sweet and tender things that he could invent, and laughing and sighing together as if too happy to be quiet. Oh! sweetest moments of my life! Why did they pass so quickly? Oh! sacrament of love, which can be taken only once, and yet changes the whole of life and fills it with memory which is wholly sweet! In all other earthly things there is something of bitterness. In this holy joy of pure and sacred love there is no bitterness—no; not any. It

leaves behind nothing of reproach or of repentance, of shame or of sorrow. It is altogether holy.

Now, when my boy had somewhat recovered from his first rapture, and I had assured him very earnestly that I was not, indeed, an angel, but a most sinful woman, daily offending in my inner thoughts (an assurance which he received, indeed, with an appearance of disbelief and scorn) I was able to consider his appearance, which was now very fine, though always, as I learned when I saw him among other gentlemen, with some soberness, as became one whose upbringing inclined him to plainness of dress as well as of speech and manner. He wore a long wig of brown hair, which might have been his own but for its length ; his hat was laced and cocked, which gave him a gallant and martial appearance ; his neckcloth was long and of fine lace ; beside him in my russet gown I must have looked truly plain and rustic ; but Robin was pleased not to think so, and love is a great magician to cheat the eyes.

He was home again ; he told me he should travel no more (yet you shall hear how far he afterwards travelled against his will) ; his only desire now was to stay at home and live as his grandfather had lived, in his native village ; he had nothing to pray for but the continuance of my love—of which, indeed, there was no doubt possible.

It was now close upon six o'clock, and I begged him to go away for the present, and if my father and Sir Christopher should agree, and if it should seem to his Honour a fit and proper thing that Robin should marry a girl so penniless as myself, why—then—we might meet again after breakfast, or after dinner ; or, indeed, at any other time, and so discourse more upon the matter. So he left me, being very reluctant to go ; and I, forgetting my garden and what I had come forth to do, returned to the house.

You must understand that all these things passed in the garden divided from the lane by a thick hedge, and that passers-by—but there were none—could not, very well, have seen

what was done, though they might have heard what was said. But if my father had looked out of his window he could have seen, and if my mother had come down-stairs she also might have seen through the window, or through the open door. This I thought not upon, nor was there anything to hide, though one would not willingly suffer anyone —even one's own mother—to see and listen at such a moment. Yet mother has since told me that she saw Robin on his knees kissing my hands, but she withdrew and would not look again.

When I stepped within the door she was at work with her wheel, and looked up with a smile upon her lips, but tears were lying in her eyes. Had I known what she had seen, I should have been ashamed.

'Daughter,' she said softly, 'thy cheek is burning red. Hast thou, perchance, been too long in the sun?'

'No, mother, the sun is not too hot.'

'Daughter,' she went on, still smiling through her tears, 'thine eyes are bright and

glowing. Hast thou a touch of fever by ill chance ?'

'No, mother, I have no fever.

'Child, thy lips are trembling and thy hands are shaking. My dear, my dear, what is it ? Tell thy mother all.'

She held out her arms to me, and I threw myself at her feet and buried my head in her lap as if I had been again a child.

'Mother ! mother !' I cried, 'Robin hath come home again, and he says he loves me, and nothing will do but he must marry me.'

'My dear,' she said, kissing and fondling me, 'Robin hath always been a good lad, and I doubt not that he hath returned unspotted from the world; but, nay, do not let us be too sure. For, first, his Honour must consent, and then Madam; and thy father must be asked—and he would never, for any worldly honour—no, never—suffer thee to marry an ungodly man. As for thy lack of fortune, I know not if that will not also stand in the way; and as for family, thy father, though he was born in New England, cometh of a good

stock, and I myself am a gentlewoman, and on both sides we bear an ancient coat-of-arms. And as for thyself, my dear, thou art—I thank God for it!—of a sweet temper and an obedient disposition. From the earliest thou hast never given thy mother any uneasiness, and I think thy heart hath been mercifully disposed towards goodness from thy childhood upwards. It is a special grace in this our long poverty and oppression; and it consoles me partly for the loss of my son Barnaby.' Here she was silent for a space, and her eyes filled and brimmed over. 'Daughter,' she said earnestly, 'thou art comely in the eyes of men; that have I known for long. It is partly for thy sweet looks that Sir Christopher loves thee; Mr. Boscorel plays music with thee partly because his eyes love to behold the beauty of woman. Nay, I mean no reproach, because it is the nature of men to love all things beautiful, whether it be the plumage of a bird or the shape of a woman's head. Yes; thou art beautiful, my dear. Beauty passes, but love remains. Thy husband will per-

chance never cease to think thee lovely if he still proves daily thy goodness and the loveliness of thy heart. My dear, thou hast long comforted thy mother; now shalt thou go, with the blessing of the Lord, to be the solace and the joy of thy husband.'

CHAPTER XII.

HUMPHREY.

PRESENTLY my father came in, the Bible in his hand. By his countenance it was plain that he had been already engaged in meditation, and that his mind was charged as with a message.

Alas! to think of the many great discourses that he pronounced (being as a dog who must be muzzled should he leave the farm-yard) to us women alone. If they were written down the world would lift up its hands with wonder, and ask if a prophet indeed had been vouchsafed to this unhappy country. The Roman Church will have that the time of Saints did not end with the last of the Apostles; that may be, and yet a Saint has no more power after death than remains

in his written words and in the memory of his life. Shall we not, however, grant that there may still be Prophets, who see and apprehend the meaning of words and of things more fully than others even as spiritually minded as themselves? Now, I say, considering what was immediately to befall us, the passage which my father read and expounded that morning was in a manner truly prophetic. It was the vision of the Basket of Summer Fruit which was vouchsafed to the Prophet Amos. He read to us that terrible chapter—everybody knows it, though it hath but fourteen verses.

'I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation. . . . I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.'

He then applied the chapter to these times, saying that the Scriptures and the prophecies apply not only to the Israel of the time when Amos or any other prophet lived, but to the people of God in all ages, yet so that some-

times one prophet seems to deliver the message that befits the time, and sometimes another. All these things prophesied by Amos had come to pass in this country of Great Britain, so that there was, and had now been for twenty-five years, a grievous famine and a sore thirst for the words of the Lord. He continued to explain and to enlarge upon this topic for nearly an hour, when he concluded with a fervent prayer that the famine would pass away and the sealed springs be open again for the children of grace to drink and be refreshed.

This done, he took his breakfast in silence, as was his wont, loving not to be disturbed by any earthly matters when his mind was full of his morning discourse. When he had eaten the bread and meat and taken the cup of cider, he arose and went back to his own room, and shut the door. We should have no more speech of him until dinner-time.

'I will speak with him, my dear,' said my mother. 'But not yet. Let us wait till we hear from Sir Christopher.'

'I would that my father had read us a passage of encouragement and promise on this morning of all mornings,' I said.

My mother turned over the leaves of the Bible. 'I will read you a verse of encouragement,' she said. 'It is the word of God as much as the Book of the Prophet Amos.' So she found and read for my comfort words which had a new meaning to me :—

'My beloved spake and said unto me, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land! The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."'

And again, these that follow :—

'Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most

vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.'

In these gracious, nay, these enraptured words, doth the Bible speak of love; and though I am not so ignorant as not to know that it is the love of the Church for Christ, yet I am persuaded by my own spiritual experience—whatever Doctors of Divinity may argue—that the earthly love of husband and wife may be spoken of in these very words as being the type of that other and higher love. And in this matter I know that my mother would also confirm my judgment.

It might have been between nine and ten that Humphrey came. Surely he was changed more than Robin; for the great white periwig which he wore (being now a physician) falling upon his shoulders did partly hide the deformity of his wry shape, and the black velvet coat did also become him mightily. As for his face, that was not changed at all. It had been grave and

serious in youth ; it was now more grave and more serious in manhood. He stood in the doorway, not seeing me—I was making a pudding for dinner, with my sleeves rolled up and my arms white with flour.

'Mistress Eykin,' he said, 'are old friends passed out of mind ?'

'Why,' my mother left her wheel and gave him her hand, ''tis Humphrey! I knew that we should see thee this morning, Humphrey. Is thy health good, my son, and is all well with thee?'

'All is well, Madam, and my health is good. How is my master—thy husband?'

'He is always well, and—but thou knowest what manner of life he leads. Of late he hath been much disquieted; he is restless—his mind runs much upon the prophecies of war and pestilence. It is the news from London and the return of the Mass which keeps him uneasy. Go in and see him, Humphrey. He will willingly suffer thee to disturb him, though we must not go near him in his hours of study.'

'Presently; but where is my old playfellow—where is Alice?'

'She is behind you, Humphrey.'

He turned, and his pale face flushed when he saw me.

'Alice?' he cried. 'Is this truly Alice? Nay, she is changed indeed! I knew not—I could not expect—nay, how could one expect——'

'There is no change,' said my mother, sharply. 'Alice was a child, and is now a woman; that is all.'

'Humphrey expects,' I said, 'that we should all stop still while Time went on. You were to become a Bachelor of Medicine, Sir, and a Fellow of All Souls' College, and to travel in Italy and France, and to come back in a velvet coat, and a long sword, and a periwig over your shoulders; and I was to be a little girl still.'

Humphrey shook his head.

'It is not only that,' he said; 'though I confess that one did not make due allowance

for the flight of Time. It is that the sweet-faced child has become'——

'No, Humphrey,' I said. 'I want no compliments. Go now, Sir, and speak with my father. Afterwards you shall tell me all that you have been doing.'

He obeyed, and opened my father's door.

'Humphrey!' My father sprang to his feet. 'Welcome, my pupil! Thou bringest good news? Nay; I have received thy letters: I read the good news in thy face—I see it in thine eyes. Welcome home!'

'Sir, I have, indeed, great news,' said Humphrey.

Then the door was closed.

He stayed there for half an hour and more: and we heard from within earnest talk —my father's voice sometimes uplifted, loud and angry, but Humphrey's always low, as if he did not wish us to overhear them. So, not to seem unto each other as if we were listening, mother and I talked of other things, such as the lightness of the pudding, and the quantity of suet which should be put into it,

and the time it should boil in the pot, and other things as women can whose hearts are full, yet they must needs be talking.

'Father hath much to say to Humphrey,' I said, after a time; 'he doth not use to like such interruption.'

'Humphrey's conversation is no interruption, my dear. They think the same thoughts and talk the same language. Your father may teach and admonish us, but he can only converse with a scholar such as himself. It is not the least evil of our oppression that he hath been cut off from the society of learned men, in which he used to take so much delight. If Humphrey remains here a little while, you shall see your father lose the eager and anxious look which hath of late possessed him. He will talk to Humphrey, and will clear his mind. Then he will be contented again for a while, or, at least, resigned.'

Presently Humphrey came forth. His face was grave and serious. My father came out of the room after him.

'Let us talk more,' he said—'let us re-

sume our talk. Join me on the hill-side, where none can hear us. It is, indeed, the Vision of the Basket of Summer Fruit that we read this morning.' His face was working with some inward excitement, and his eyes were full of a strange light as of a glad conqueror, or of one—forbid the thought!—who was taking a dire revenge. He strode down the garden and out into the lanes.

'Thus,' said my mother, 'will he walk out, and sometimes remain in the woods, walking, preaching to the winds, and swinging his arms the whole day long. Art thou a physician, and canst thou heal him, Humphrey?'

'If the cause be removed, the disease will be cured. Perhaps before long the cause will be removed.'

'The cause—oh! the cause—what is the cause but the tyranny of the Law? He who was ordered by Heaven itself to preach hath been, perforce, silent for five-and-twenty years. His very life hath been taken from him. And you talk of removing the cause!'

'Madam, if the Law suffer him once more to preach freely, would that satisfy him—and you?'

My mother shook her head. 'The Law,' she said, 'now we have a Papist on the throne is far more likely to lead my husband to the stake than to set him free.'

'That shall we shortly see,' said Humphrey.

My mother bent her head over her wheel as one who wishes to talk no more upon the subject. She loved not to speak concerning her husband to any except to me.

I went out into the garden with Humphrey. I was foolish. I laughed at nothing. I talked nonsense. Oh! I was so happy that if a pipe and tabor had been heard in the village I should have danced to the music, like poor Barnaby the night before he ran away. I regarded not the grave and serious face of my companion.

'You are merry, Alice,' said Humphrey.

'It is because you are come back again—

you and Robin. Oh! the time has been long and dull—and now you have come back we shall all be happy again. Yes; my father will cease to fret and rage: he will talk Latin and Greek with you: Sir Christopher will be happy only in looking upon you; Madam will have her son home again; and Mr. Boscorel will bring out all the old music for you. Humphrey, it is a happy day that brings you home again.'

'It may be a happy day also for me,' he said; 'but there is much to be done. When the business we have in hand is accomplished'——

'What business, Humphrey?' For he spoke so gravely that it startled me.

''Tis business of which thy father knows, child. Nay; let us not talk of it. I think and hope that it is as good as accomplished now before it is well taken in hand. It is not of that business that I would speak. Alice, thou art so beautiful and so tall'——

'Nay, Humphrey. I must not be flattered.'

'And I so crooked.'

'Humphrey, I will not hear this talk. You, so great a scholar thus to speak of yourself!'

'Let me speak of myself, my dear. Hear me for a moment.' I declare that I had not the least thought of what he was going to say, my mind being wholly occupied with the idea of Robin.

'I am a physician, as you doubtless know. I am Medicinæ Doctor of Oxford, of Padua, Montpellier, and Leyden. I know all—I may fairly say, and without boasting—that may be learned by one of my age from schools of medicine and from books on the science and practice of healing. I believe, in short, that I am as good a physician as can be found within these seas. I am minded, as soon as tranquillity is restored, to set up as a physician in London, where I have already many friends, and am assured of some support. I think, humbly speaking, that reasonable success awaits me. Alice—you know that I have loved you all my life—will you marry me,

crooked as I am ? Oh ! you cannot but know that I have loved you all my life. Oh ! child,' he stretched forth his hands, and in his eyes there was a world of longing and of sadness which moved my heart. 'My dear, the crooked in body have no friends among men ; they cannot join in their rough sports, nor drink with them, nor fight with them. They have no chance of happiness but in love, my dear. My dear, give me that chance. I love thee. Oh ! my dear, give me that chance !'

Never had I seen Humphrey so moved before. I felt guilty and ashamed in the presence of this passion of which I was the most unworthy cause.

'Oh ! Humphrey, stop—for Heaven's sake stop !—because I am but this very morning promised to Robin, who loves me, too—and I love Robin, Humphrey.' He sank back, pale and disordered, and I thought that he would swoon, but he recovered. 'Humphrey, never doubt that I love you, too. But oh ! I love Robin, and Robin loves me.'

'Yes, dear—yes, child—yes, Alice,' he

said in broken accents. 'I understand. Everything is for Robin—everything for Robin. Why, I might have guessed it! For Robin, the straight and comely figure; for Robin, the strength; for Robin, the inheritance; for Robin, happy love. For me, a crooked body; for me, a feeble frame; for me, the loss of fortune; for me, contempt and poverty; for me, the loss of love—all for Robin—all for Robin!'

'Humphrey—surely thou wouldst not envy or be jealous of Robin!' Never had I seen him thus moved, or heard him thus speak.

He made no answer for a while. Then he said slowly and painfully,

'Alice, I am ashamed. Why should not Robin have all? Who am I that I should have anything? Forgive me, child. I have lived in a paradise which fools create for themselves. I have suffered myself to dream that what I ardently desired was possible and even probable. Forgive me. Let me be as before—your brother. Will you forgive me, dear?'

'Oh, Humphrey! there is nothing for me to forgive.'

'Nay, there is much for me to repent of. Forget it then, if there is nothing to forgive.'

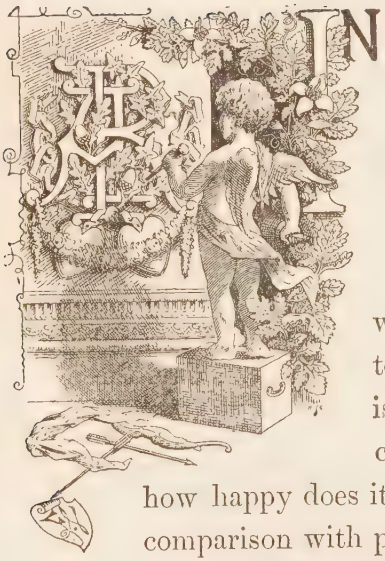
'I have forgotten it already, Humphrey.'

'So'—he turned upon me his grave, sweet face (to think of it makes me yearn with tenderness and pity)—'So, farewell, fond dream! Do not think, my dear, that I envy Robin. 'Twas a sweet dream! Yet, I pray that Heaven in wrath may forget me if ever I suffer this passion of envy to hurt my cousin Robin or thyself!'

So saying, he burst from me with distraction in his face. Poor Humphrey! Alas! when I look back and consider this day, there is a doubt which haunts me. Always had I loved Robin: that is most true. But I had always loved Humphrey: that is most true. What if it had been Humphrey instead of Robin who had arisen in the early morning to find his sweetheart in the garden when the dew was yet upon the grass?

CHAPTER XIII.

ONE DAY.



IN TIMES of great sorrow the godly person ought to look forward to the never-ending joy and happiness that will follow this short life. Yet we still look backwards to the happy time that is past and can never come again. And then how happy does it seem to have been in comparison with present affliction!

It pleased Heaven after many trials to restore my earthly happiness—at least, in its principal part, which is earthly love. Some

losses—grievous and lamentable—there were which could not be restored. Yet for a long time I had no other comfort (apart from that hope which I trust was never suffered to leave me) than the recollection of one single day in its course, too short, from dewy morn till dusky eve. I began that day with the sweetest joy that a girl can ever experience—namely, the return of her lover and the happiness of learning that he loves her more than ever, with the knowledge that her heart hath gone forth from her and is wholly his. To such a girl the woods and fields become the very Garden of Eden ; the breath of the wind is as the voice of the Lord blessing another Eve ; the very showers are the tears of gladness and gratitude ; the birds sing hymns of praise ; the leaves of the trees whisper words of love ; the brook prattles of kisses ; the flowers offer incense ; the royal course of the sun in splendour, the glories of the sunrise and sunset, the twinkling stars of night, the shadows of the flying clouds, the pageant of the summer day—these are all

prepared for that one happy girl and for her happy lover! Oh, Divine Gift of Love! which thus gives the whole world with its fruits in season to each pair in turn! Nay, doth it not create them anew? What was Adam without Eve? And Eve was created for no other purpose than to be a companion to the man.

I say, then, that the day when Robin took me in his arms and kissed me—not as he had done when we parted and I was still a child, but with the fervent kiss of a lover—was the happiest day in all my life. I say that I have never forgotten that day, but, by recalling any point of it, I remember all: how he held my hand and how he made me confess that I loved him; how we kissed and parted, to meet again. As for poor Humphrey, I hardly gave him so much as a thought of pity. Then, how we wandered along the brook hand in hand!

'Never to part again, my dear,' said the fond lover. 'Here will we live, and here we will die. Let Benjamin become, if he please,

Lord Chancellor, and Humphrey a great physician: they will have to live among men in towns, where every other man is a rogue. We shall live in this sweet country place, where the people may be rude but they are not knaves. Why, in that great city of London, where the merchants congregate upon the Exchange and look so full of dignity and wisdom, each man is thinking all the time that, if he fail to overreach his neighbour, that neighbour will overreach him. Who would live such a life when he can pass it in the fields with such a companion as my Alice?'

The pleasures of London had only increased his thirst for the country life. Surely, never was seen a swain more truly rustic in all his thoughts! The fine ladies at the playhouse, with their painted faces, made him, he told me, think of one who wore a russet frock in Somersetshire, and did not paint her sweet face—this was the way he talked. The plays they acted could never even be read, much less witnessed, by that dear girl—so full of wickedness they were.

At the assemblies the ladies were jealous of each other, and put on scornful looks when one seemed preferred; at the taverns the men drank and bellowed songs and quarrelled; in the streets they fought and took the wall and swaggered; there was nothing but fighting among the baser sort, with horrid imprecations; at the coffee-houses the politicians argued and quarrelled. Nay, in the very churches the sermons were political arguments, and while the clergyman read his discourse the gallants ogled the ladies. All this and more he told me.

To hear my boy, one would think there was nothing in London but what was wicked and odious. No doubt it is a wicked place, where many men live together; those who are wicked easily find each other out, and are encouraged in their wickedness. Yet there must be many honest and God-fearing persons, otherwise the Judgment of Heaven would again fall upon that city as it did in the time of the Plague and in the Great Fire.

'My pretty Puritan,' said Robin, 'I am

now come away from that place, and I hope never to see it again. Oh! native hills, I salute you! Oh! woods and meadows, I have returned, to wander again in your delightful shade.' Then, which was unusual in my boy, and would have better become Mr. Boscorel or Humphrey, he began to repeat verses. I knew not that he had ever learned any :—

> 'As I range these spacious fields,
> Feast on all that Nature yields ;
> Everything inspires delight,
> Charms my smell, my taste, my sight ;
> Every rural sound I hear
> Soothes my soul and tunes my ear.'

I do not know where Robin found these verses, but as he repeated them, waving his arm around, I thought that Humphrey himself never made sweeter lines.

He then told me how Humphrey would certainly become the most learned physician of the time, and that he was already master of a polite and dignified manner which would procure him the patronage of the great and

the confidence of all. It was pleasant to hear him praise his cousin without jealousy or envy. To be sure, he knew not then—though afterwards I told him—that Humphrey was his rival. Even had he known this, such was the candour of my Robin and the integrity of his soul that he would have praised him even more loudly.

One must not repeat more of the kind and lovely things that the dear boy said while we strolled together by the brook-side.

While thus abroad we walked—'twas in the forenoon, after Humphrey's visit—Sir Christopher, his grandfather, dressed in his best coat and his gold-laced hat, which he commonly kept for church, and accompanied by Madam, walked from the Manor House through the village till they came to our cottage. Then, with great ceremony, they entered, Sir Christopher bowing low, and Madam dropping a deep courtesy to my mother, who sat humbly at her wheel.

'Madam,' said Sir Christopher, 'we would, with your permission, say a few

words with the learned Dr. Eykin and yourself.'

My father, who had now returned and was in his room, came forth when he was called. His face had recovered something of its serenity, but his eyes were still troubled. Madam sat down, but Sir Christopher and my father stood.

'Sir,' said his Honour, 'I will proceed straight to the point. My grandson desires to marry your daughter Alice. Robin is a good lad; not a scholar if you will; for his religion, the root of the matter is in him; for the goodness of his heart I will answer; for his habit of life, he hath, so far as we can learn, acquired no vile vices of the city—he doth neither drink nor gamble, nor waste his health and strength in riotous living; and for his means, they are my own. All that I have will be his. 'Tis no great estate, but 'twill serve him as it hath served me. Sir, the boy's mother and I have come to ask your daughter in marriage. We know her worth, and we are right well satisfied that

our boy hath made so good and wise a choice.'

'They were marrying and giving in marriage when the Flood came; they will be marrying and giving in marriage in the great day of the Lord,' said my father.

'Yes, gossip; but that is no reason why they should not now be marrying and giving in marriage.'

'You ask my consent?' said my father. 'This surprises me. The child is too young: she is not yet of marriageable age'——

'Husband, she is nigh upon her twentieth birthday!'

'I thought she had been but twelve or thereabouts! My consent? Why, Sir Christopher, in the eyes of the world this is great condescension on your part to take a penniless girl. I looked, I suppose, to the marriage of my daughter some time—perhaps to a farmer—yet—yet, we are told that a virtuous woman hath a price far above rubies; and that it is she who buildeth up the house, and we are nowhere told that she must bring

her husband a purse of gold. Sir Christopher, it would be the blackest ingratitude in us to deny you, even if this thing were (which I say not) against the mind of our daughter.'

'It is not—it is not,' said my mother.

'Wherefore, seeing that the young man is a good man as youths go, though in the matter of the Latin syntax he hath yet much to learn: and that his heart is disposed towards religion, I am right glad that he should take our girl to wife.'

'Bravely said!' cried Sir Christopher. 'Hands upon it, man! And we will have a merry wedding. But to-day I bid you both to come and feast with us. We will have holiday and rejoicing.'

'Yes,' said my father, 'we will feast; though to-morrow comes the Deluge.' I know now what he meant, but at that time we knew not, and it seemed to his Honour a poor way of rejoicing at the return of the boys and the betrothal of his daughter thus to be foretelling woes. 'The Vision of the Plumb-line is before mine eyes,' my father went on.

'Is the land able to bear all this? We talk of feasting and of marriages. Yet a few days, or perhaps already——But we will rejoice together, my old friend and benefactor, we will rejoice together.' With these strange words he turned and went back to his room, and, after some tears with my mother, Madam went home and Sir Christopher with her. But in honour to the day he kept on his best coat.

Robin suffered me to go home, but only that I might put on my best frock (I had but two) and make my hair straight, which had been blown into curls, as was the way with my hair. And then, learning from my mother with the utmost satisfaction what had passed, he led me by the hand, as if I were already his bride, and so to the Manor House, where first Sir Christopher saluted me with great kindness, calling me his dear granddaughter, and saying that next to Robin's safe return he asked for nothing more than to see me Robin's wife. And Madam kissed me, with tears in her eyes, and said that she could desire nothing better for her son, and that she

was sure I should do my best endeavours to make the boy happy. Then Humphrey, as quietly as if he had not also asked me to be his wife, kissed my hand, and wished me joy: and Mr. Boscorel also kissed me, and declared that Robin ought to be the happiest dog on earth. And so we sat down to our feast.

The conversation at dinner was graver than the occasion demanded. For though our travellers continually answered questions about the foreign lands and peoples they had seen, yet the subject returned always to the condition of the country, and to what would happen.

After dinner we sat in the garden, and the gentlemen began to talk of Right Divine and of Non-Resistance, and here it seemed to me as if Mr. Boscorel was looking on as from an eminence apart. For when he had once stated the texts and arguments upon which the High Church party do mostly rely, he retired and made no further objections, listening in silence while my father held forth upon the duty of rising against wicked Princes. At last, how-

ever, being challenged to reply by Humphrey, Mr. Boscorel thus made answer :

'The doctrine that subjects may or may not rebel against their Sovereign is one which I regard with interest so long as it remains a question of logic and argument only. Unfortunately, the times are such that we may be called upon to make a practical application of it : in which case there may follow once more civil war, with hard knocks on both sides, and much loss of things temporal. Wherefore to my learned brother's arguments, which I admit to be plausible, I will, for the present, offer no reply, except to pray Heaven that the occasion may not arise of converting a disputed doctrine into a rule of conduct.'

Alas! even while he spoke the messenger was speeding swiftly towards us who was to call upon all present to take a side.

The question is now, I hope, decided for ever : but many men had first to die. It was not decided then, but three years later, when King William cut the knot, and, with the applause of the nation, pulled down his father-

in-law, and mounted the throne himself with his gracious consort. We are agreed, at last, that Kings, like judges, generals, and all great officers of State, are to hold their offices in good behaviour. If they enter into machinations against the liberty of the people and desert the national religion, they must descend, and let others take their place. But before that right could be established for the country, streams of blood must first flow.

While they talked, we—I mean Madam, my mother, and myself—sat and listened. But my mind was full of another subject, and I heard but little of what was said, noting chiefly the fiery ardour of my father and the careless grace of Mr. Boscorel.

Presently my father, who was never easy in the company of Mr. Boscorel—(so oil and water will not agree to fill a cup in friendship)—and, besides, being anxious to rejoin the society of his books, arose and went away, and with him my mother—he, in his ragged cassock, who was a learned scholar ; she in her plain home-spun, who was a gentlewoman

by birth. Often had I thought of our poverty with bitterness. But now it was with a softened heart that I saw them walk side by side across the lawns. For now I understood plainly—and for the first time—how love can strengthen and console. My mother was poor, but she was not therefore unhappy.

Mr. Boscorel also rose and went away with Humphrey. They went to talk of things more interesting to the Rector than the doctrine of Non-Resistance: of painting, namely, and statuary and medals. And when we presently walked from the Rectory gardens we heard a most gladsome scraping of fiddlestrings within, which showed that the worthy man was making the most of Humphrey's return.

When Sir Christopher had taken his pipe of tobacco he fell asleep. Robin and I walked in the garden and renewed our vows. Needs must that I should tell him all that I had done or thought since he went away. As if the simple thoughts of a country maid should be of interest to a man! Yet he seemed

pleased to question and to listen, and presently broke into a rapture, swearing that he was in love with an angel. Young lovers may, it is feared, fall into grievous sin by permitting themselves these extravagances of speech and thought; yet it is hard to keep them sober, and besides (because every sin in man meeteth with its correspondent in woman), if the lover be extravagant, the maiden takes pleasure in his extravagance. To call a mortal, full of imperfections, an angel, is little short of blasphemy. Yet I heard it with, I confess, a secret pleasure. We know ourselves and the truth concerning ourselves; we do not deceive ourselves as to our imperfections; yet we are pleased that our lovers should so speak and think of us as if we were angels indeed.

Robin told me presently, ceasing his extravagances for a while, that he was certain something violent was on foot. To be sure, everybody expected so much. He said, moreover, that he believed Humphrey had certain knowledge of what was going to happen;

that before they left the Low Countries Humphrey had been present at a meeting of the exiles in Rotterdam, where it was well known that Lord Argyle's expedition was resolved upon; that he had been much engaged in London after their return, and had paid many visits, the nature of which he kept secret; and that on the road there was not a town and scarcely a village where Humphrey had not someone to visit.

'My dear,' he said, 'Humphrey is slight as to stature and strength, but he carries a stout heart. There is no man more bitter against the King than he, and none more able if his counsels were listened to. Monmouth, I am certain, purposes to head an expedition into England like that of Lord Argyle in Scotland. The history of England hath many instances of such successful attempts. King Stephen, King Henry IV., King Henry VII., are all examples. If Monmouth lands, Humphrey will join him, I am sure. And I, my dear'——he paused.

'And you too, Robin? Oh! must you

too go forth to fight? And yet, if the Duke doth head a rising all the world would follow. Oh! to drive away the Papist King and restore our liberty!'

'My dear, I will do what my grandfather approves. If it be my duty to go, he will send me forth.'

I had almost forgotten to say that Madam took me to her own chamber, where she opened a box and pulled out a gold chain, very fine. This she hung about my neck, and bade me sit down, and gave me some sound advice, reminding me that woman was the weaker vessel, and should look to her husband not only to love and cherish her, but also to prevent her from falling into certain grievous sins, as of temper, deceitfulness, vanity, and the like, to which the weaker nature is ever prone. Many other things she said, being a good and virtuous woman, but I pass them over.

After supper we went again into the garden, the weather being warm and fine. The sun went down, but the sky was full of

light, though it was past nine o'clock and time for me to go home and to bed. Yet we lingered. The birds had gone to sleep ; there was no whisper of the wind ; the village was in silence. And Robin was whispering in my ear. I remember—I remember the very tones of his voice, which was low and sweet. I remember the words he said : 'Sweet love ! Sweet love ! How could I live so long without thee !' I remember my swelling heart and my glowing cheeks. Oh ! Robin—Robin ! Oh ! poor heart ! poor maid ! The memory of this one day was nearly all thou hadst to feed upon for so long—so long a time !

CHAPTER XIV.

THE VISION OF THE BASKET.

SUDDENLY we heard footsteps, as of those who are running, and my father's voice speaking loud.

'Sing, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all the heart!'——

'Now, in the name of Heaven,' cried Sir Christopher, 'what meaneth this?'

'The Arm of the Lord! The Deliverance of Israel!'

He burst upon us, dragging a man with him by the arm. In the twilight I could only see, at first, that it was a broad, thick-set man. But my father's slender form looked taller as he waved his arms and cried aloud. Had he been clad in a sheepskin, he would have

resembled one of those ancient Prophets whose words were always in his mouth.

'Good friend,' said Sir Christopher, 'what meaneth these cries? Whom have we here?'

Then the man with my father stepped forward and took off his hat. Why, I knew him at once; though it was ten years since I had seen him last! 'Twas my brother Barnaby—none other—come home again. He was now a great strong man—a stouter have I never seen, though he was somewhat under the middle height, broad in the shoulders, and thick of chest. Beside him Robin, though reasonable in breadth, showed like a slender sapling. But he had still the same good-natured face, though now much broader. It needed no more than the first look to know my brother Barnaby again.

'Barnaby,' I cried, 'Barnaby, hast thou forgotten me?' I caught one of his great hands—never, surely, were there bigger hands than Barnaby's! 'Hast thou forgotten me?'

'Why,' he said slowly—'twas ever a boy

slow of speech and of understanding—'belike, 'tis Sister.' He kissed my forehead. 'It is Sister,' he said, as if he were tasting a cup of ale and was pronouncing on its quality. 'How dost thou, Sister? Bravely, I hope. Thou art grown, Sister. I have seen my mother, and—and—she does bravely, too; though I left her crying. 'Tis their way, the happier they be.'

'Barnaby?' said Sir Christopher, 'is it thou, scapegrace? Where hast thou—— But first tell us what has happened. Briefly, man.'

'In two words, Sir: the Duke of Monmouth landed the day before yesterday at Lyme-Regis with my Lord Grey and a company of a hundred—of whom I was one.'

The Duke had landed! Then what Robin expected had come to pass! And my brother Barnaby was with the insurgents! My heart beat fast.

'The Duke of Monmouth hath landed!' Sir Christopher repeated, and sat down again,

as one who knows not what may be the meaning of the news.

'Ay, Sir, the Duke hath landed. We left Holland on the 24th of May, and we made the coast at Lyme at daybreak on Thursday the 11th. 'Tis now, I take it, Saturday. The Duke had with him on board ship Lord Grey, Mr. Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, Mr. Heywood Dare of Taunton '——

'I know the man,' said Sir Christopher, 'for an impudent, loud-tongued fellow.'

'Perhaps he was, Sir,' said Barnaby, gravely. 'Perhaps he was, but now '——

'How "was"?'

'He was shot on Thursday evening by Mr. Fletcher for offering him violence with a cane, and is now dead.'

''Tis a bad beginning. Go on, Barnaby.'

'The Duke had also Mr. Ferguson, Colonel Venner, Mr. Chamberlain, and others whom I cannot remember. First we set Mr. Dare and Mr. Chamberlain ashore at Seatown, whence they were to carry intelligence of the

rising to the Duke's friends. The Duke landed at seven o'clock with his company, in seven boats. First, he fell on his knees and prayed aloud. Then he drew his sword, and we all marched after to the market-place, where he raised his flag and caused the Declaration to be read. Here it is, your Honour. He lugged out a copy of the Declaration, which Sir Christopher put aside, saying that he would read it in the morning.

'Then we tossed our hats and shouted "A Monmouth! A Monmouth!" Sixty stout young fellows 'listed on the spot. Then we divided our forces, and began to land the cannon —four pretty pieces as you could wish to see —and the arms, of which I doubt if we have enough, and the powder—two hundred and fifty barrels. The Duke lay on Thursday night at the George. Next day, before dawn, the country people began flocking in.'

'What gentlemen have come in?'

'I know not, Sir—my duty was most of the day on board. In the evening I received leave to ride home, and indeed, Sir Christopher

had orders to carry the Duke's Declaration to yourself. And now we shall be well rid of the King, the Pope, and the Devil!'

'Because,' said my father, solemnly—'because with lies ye have made the hearts of the righteous sad whom I have not made sad.'

'And what doest thou among this goodly company, friend Barnaby?'

'I am to be a Captain in one of the regiments,' said Barnaby, grinning with pride: 'though a sailor, yet can I fight with the best. My Colonel is Mr. Holmes; and my Major, Mr. Parsons. On board the frigate I was master and navigated her.'

'There will be knocks, Barnaby; knocks, I doubt.'

'By your Honour's leave, I have been where knocks were flying for ten years, and I will take my share, remembering still the treatment of my father and the poverty of my mother.'

'It is rebellion, Barnaby!—rebellion!'

'Why, Sir, Oliver Cromwell was a rebel. And your Honour fought in the army of the

Earl of Essex—and what was he but a rebel ?'

I wondered to hear my brother speak with so much boldness, who ten years before had bowed low and pulled his hair in presence of his Honour. Yet Sir Christopher seemed to take this boldness in good part.

'Barnaby,' he said, 'thou art a stout and proper lad, and I doubt not thy courage—nay, I see it in thy face, which hath resolution in it and yet is modest ; no ruffler or boaster art thou, friend Barnaby. Yet—yet—if rebellion fail—even rebellion in a just cause—then those who rise lose their lives in vain, and the cause is lost, until better times.' This he said as one who speaketh to himself. I saw him look upon his grandson. 'The King is—a Papist,' he said, 'that is most true. A Papist should not be suffered to rule this country. Yet to rise in rebellion! Have a care, lad! What if the time be not yet ripe ? How know we who will join the Duke ?'

'The people are flocking to his standard by thousands,' said Barnaby. 'When I rode

away last night the Duke's secretaries were writing down their names as fast as they could be entered; they were landing the arms and already exercising the recruits. And such a spirit they show, Sir, it would do your heart good only once to witness!'

Now, as I looked at Barnaby, I became aware that he was not only changed in appearance, but that he was also very finely dressed —namely, in a scarlet coat and a sword with a silken sash, with laced ruffles, a gold-laced hat, a great wig, white breeches, and a flowered waistcoat. In the light of day, as I afterwards discovered, there were stains of wine visible upon the coat, and the ruffles were torn, and the waistcoat had marks upon it as of tar. One doth not, to be sure, expect in the sailing master of a frigate the same neatness as in a gallant of Saint James's. Yet, our runaway lad must have prospered.

'What doth the Duke intend?' Sir Christopher asked him.

'Indeed, Sir, I know not. 'Tis said by some that he will raise the West Country;

and by some that he will march north into Cheshire, where he hath many friends; and by others that he will march upon London, and call upon all good Protestants to rise and join him. We look to have an army of twenty thousand within a week. As for the King, it is doubted whether he can raise a paltry five thousand to meet us. Courage, Dad'—he dared to call his father, the Rev. Comfort Eykin, Doctor of Divinity, 'Dad'!—and he clapped him lustily upon the shoulder; 'thou shalt mount the pulpit yet, ay, of Westminster Abbey, if it so please you!'

His father paid no heed to this conversation, being wrapt in his own thoughts.

'I know not,' said Sir Christopher, 'what to think. The news is sudden. And yet—and yet'——

'We waste time,' cried my father, stamping his foot. 'Oh! we waste the time talking. What helps it to talk? Every honest man must now be up and doing. Why, it is a plain duty laid upon us. The finger of Heaven is visible, I say, in this. Out of the

very sins of Charles Stuart hath the instrument for the destruction of his race been forged. A plain duty, I say. As for me, I must preach and exhort. As for my son, who was dead and yet liveth'—he laid his hand upon Barnaby's shoulder—'time was when I prayed that he might become a godly minister of God's Word. Now I perceive clearly that the Lord hath ways of His own. My son shall fight and I shall preach. Perhaps he will rise and become another Cromwell!'—— Barnaby grinned.

'Sir,' said my father, turning hotly upon his Honour, 'I perceive that thou art lukewarm. If the Cause be the Lord's, what matter for the chances? The issue is in the hands of the Lord. As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. Yea, I freely offer myself, and my son, and my wife, and my daughter—even my tender daughter—to the Cause of the Lord. Young men and maidens, old men and children, the Voice of the Lord calleth!'

Nobody made reply; my father looked

before him, as if he saw in the twilight of the summer night a vision of what was to follow. His face, as he gazed, changed. His eyes, which were fierce and fiery, softened. His lips smiled. Then he turned his face and looked upon each of us in turn—upon his son and upon his wife and upon me, upon Robin and upon Sir Christopher. 'It is, indeed,' he said, 'the Will of the Lord. Why, what though the end be violent death to me, and to all of us ruin and disaster? We do but share the afflictions foretold in the Vision of the Basket of Summer Fruit. What is death? What is the loss of earthly things compared with what shall follow to those who obey the Voice that calls? Children, let us up and be doing. As for me, I shall have a season of freedom before I die. For twenty-five years have I been muzzled or compelled to whisper and mutter in corners and hiding-places. I have been a dumb dog. I, whose heart was full and overflowing with the sweet and precious Word of God; I, to whom it is not life but death to sit in silence! Now I shall

deliver my soul before I die. Sirs, the Lord hath given to every man a weapon or two with which to fight. To me he hath given an eye and a tongue for discerning and proclaiming the word of sacred doctrine. I have been muzzled—a dumb dog, I say—though sometimes I have been forced to climb among the hills and speak to the bending tree-tops. Now I shall be free again, and I will speak, and all the ends of the earth shall hear.'

His eyes gleamed, he panted and gasped, and waved his arms.

'As for sister, Dad,' said Barnaby, 'she and mother may bide at home.'

'No; they shall go with me. I offer my wife, my son, my daughter, and myself to the Cause of the Lord.'

'A camp is but a rough place for a woman,' said Barnaby.

'She is offered; she is dedicated; she shall go with us.'

I know not what was in his mind, or why he wished that I should go with him, unless it was a desire to give everything that he had

—to hold back nothing—to the Lord; therefore he would give his children as well as himself. As for me, my heart glowed to think that I was even worthy to join in such a Cause. What could a woman do? But that I should find out.

'Robin,' I whispered. 'tis Religion calls. If I am to be among the followers of the Duke, thou wilt not remain behind?'

'Child'—it was my mother who whispered to me; I had not seen her before—'Child, let us obey him. Perhaps it will be better for him if we are at his side. And there is Barnaby. But we must not be in their way. We shall find a place to sit aside and wait. Alas! that my son hath returned to us only to go fighting. We will go with them, daughter.'

'We should be better without women,' said Barnaby, grumbling; 'I would as lief have a woman on shipboard as in a camp. To be sure, if Dad has set his heart upon it—and then he will not stay long in camp, where the cursing of the men is already loud enough

to scare a preacher out of his cassock. Dad, I say '—— But my father was fallen again into a kind of rapture, and heard nothing.

'When doth the Duke begin his march?' he said suddenly.

'I know not. But we shall find him, never fear.'

'I must have speech with him at the earliest possible time. Hours are precious, and we waste them—we waste them.'

'Well, Sir, it is bedtime. To-morrow we can ride; unless, because it is the Sabbath, you would choose to wait till Monday. And as to the women, by your leave, it is madness to bring them to a camp.'

'Wait till Monday? Art thou mad, Barnaby? Art thou mad? Why, I have things to tell the Duke. Shall we waste eight precious hours? Up! let us ride all night. To-morrow is the Sabbath, and I will preach. Yea—I will preach. My soul longeth—yea, even it fainteth, for the Courts of the Lord. Quick! quick! let us mount and ride all night!'

At this moment Humphrey joined us.

'Lads,' said Sir Christopher, 'you are fresh from Holland. Knew you aught of this?'

'Sir,' said Humphrey, 'I confess that I have already told Dr. Eykin what to expect. I knew that the Duke was coming. Robin did not know, because I would not drag him into the conspiracy. I knew that the Duke was coming, and that without delay. I have myself had speech in Amsterdam with his Grace, who comes to restore the Protestant religion and to give freedom of worship to all good Protestant people. His friends have promises of support everywhere. Indeed, Sir, I think that the expedition is well planned, and is certain of support. Success is in the hands of the Lord; but we do not expect that there will be any serious opposition. With submission, Sir, I am under promise to join the Duke. I came over in advance to warn his friends, as I rode from London, of his approach. Thousands are waiting in readiness for him. But, Sir, of all

this, I repeat, Robin knew nothing. I have been for three months in the counsels of those who desire to drive forth the Popish King, but Robin have I kept in the dark.'

'Humphrey,' said Robin, reproachfully, 'am not I, also, a Protestant?'

CHAPTER XV.

A NIGHT AND MORNING.

When I read of men possessed by some Spirit—that is to say, compelled to go hither and thither where, but for the Spirit, they would not go, and to say things which they would not otherwise have said—I think of our midnight ride to Lyme, and of my father there, and of the three weeks' madness which followed. It was some Spirit—whether of good or evil, I cannot say, [and I dare not so much as to

question—which seized him. That he hurried away to join the Duke on the first news of his landing, without counting the cost or weighing the chances, is easy to be understood. Like Humphrey, he was led by his knowledge of the great numbers who hated the Catholic religion to believe that they, like himself, would rise with one accord. He also remembered the successful rebellion against the first Charles, and expected nothing less than a repetition of that success. This, I know, was what the exiles in Holland thought and believed. The Duke, they said, was the darling of the people; he was the Protestant champion: who would not press forward when he should draw the sword? But what other man—what man in his sober senses would have dragged his wife and daughter with him to the godless riot of a camp? Perhaps he wanted them to share his triumph, to listen while he moved the soldiers, as that ancient hermit Peter moved the people to the Holy Wars? But I know not. He said that I was to be, like Jeph-

thah's daughter, consecrated to the Cause of the Lord; and what he meant by that I never understood.

He was so eager to start upon the journey that he would not wait a moment. The horses must be saddled; we must mount and away. Mark that they were Sir Christopher's horses which we borrowed; this also was noted afterwards for the ruin of that good old man, with other particulars: as that Monmouth's Declaration was found in the house (Barnaby brought it); one of Monmouth's Captains, Barnaby Eykin by name, had ridden from Lyme to Bradford in order to see him; he was a friend of the preacher Dr. Eykin; he was grandfather to one of the rebels and grand-uncle to another; with many other things. But these were enough.

'Surely; surely, friend,' said Sir Christopher, 'thou wilt not take wife and daughter? They cannot help the Cause; they have no place in a camp?'

'Young men and maidens: one with another. Quick! we waste the time.'

'And to ride all night? Consider, man—all night long!'

'What is a night? They will have all eternity for rest.'

'He hath set his heart upon it,' said my mother. 'Let us go—a night's weariness will not do much harm. Let us go, Sir Christopher, without further parley.'

'Go then, in the Name of God,' said the old man. 'Child, give me a kiss.' He took me in his arms and kissed me on the forehead. 'Thou art, then,' he said tenderly, 'devoted to the Protestant Cause. Why, thou art already promised to a Protestant since this morning: forget not that promise, child. Humphrey and Barnaby will protect thee—and'——

'Sir,' cried Robin quickly, 'by your leave, I alone have the right to go with her and to protect her.'

'Nay, Robin,' I said, 'stay here until Sir Christopher himself bids thee go. That will

perhaps be very soon. Remember thy promise. We did not know, Robin, an hour ago, that the promise would be claimed so soon. Robin '—for he murmured—'I charge thee, remain at home until '——

'I promise thee, Sweetheart.' But he hung his head and looked ashamed.

Sir Christopher, holding my hand, stepped forth upon the grass and looked upwards into the clear sky, where in the transparent twilight we could see a few stars twinkling.

'This, friend Eykin—this, Humphrey,' he said, gravely, 'is a solemn night for all. No more fateful night hath ever fallen upon any of us: no! not that day when I joined Hampden's new regiment and followed with the army of Lord Essex. Granted that we have a righteous cause, we know not that our leader hath in him the root of the matter. To rise against the King is a most weighty matter—fatal if it fail, a dangerous precedent if it succeed. Civil war is, of all wars, the most grievous; to fight under a leader who

doth not live after the Laws of God is, methinks, most dangerous. The Duke hath lit a torch which will spread flames everywhere'——

'It is the Voice of the Lord which calleth us!' my father interrupted. 'To-morrow I shall speak again to God's Elect.'

'Sir,' said Humphrey, very seriously, 'I pray you think not that this enterprise hath been rashly entered upon, nor that we depend upon the judgment of the Duke alone. It is, most unhappily, true that his life is sinful, and so is that of Lord Grey, who hath deserted his own lawful wife for her sister. But those who have pushed on the enterprise consider that the Duke is, at least, a true Protestant. They have, moreover, received solid assurances of support from every quarter. You have been kept in the dark from the beginning at my own earnest request, because, though I knew full well your opinion, I would not trouble your peace or endanger your person. Suffer us, then, to depart, and, for yourself, do nothing; and

keep—oh! Sir, I entreat you—keep Robin at home until our success leaves no room for doubt.'

'Go, then, go,' said Sir Christopher; 'I have grievous misgivings that all is not well. But go, and Heaven bless the Cause!'

Robin kissed me, whispering that he would follow, and that before many days; and so we mounted and rode forth. In such hot haste did we depart that we took with us no change of raiment or any provision for the journey at all, save that Barnaby, who, as I afterwards found, never forgot the provisions, found time to get together a small parcel of bread and meat, and a flask of Canary, with which to refresh our spirits later on. We even rode away without any money.

My father rode one horse and my mother sat behind him: then I followed, Barnaby marching manfully beside me, and Humphrey rode last. The ways are rough, so that those who ride, even by daylight, go but slowly; and we, riding between high hedges, went much too slowly for my father, who, if he

spoke at all, cried out impatiently, 'Quicker ! Quicker ! we lose the time.'

He sat bending over the horse's head, with rounded shoulders, his feet sticking out on either side, his long white hair and his ragged cassock floating in the wind. In his left hand he carried his Bible as a soldier carries his sword ; on his head he wore the black silk cap in which he daily sat at work. He was praying and meditating ; he was preparing the sermon which he would deliver in the morning.

Barnaby plodded on beside me : night or day made no difference to him. He slept when he could, and worked when he must. Sailors keep their watch day and night without any difference.

'It was Sir Christopher that I came after,' he told me presently. 'Mr. Dare—who hath since been killed by Mr. Fletcher—told the Duke that if Sir Christopher Challis would only come into camp, old as he is, the country gentlemen of his opinions would follow to a man, so respected is he. Well, he will not. But

we have his grandnephew, Humphrey ; and, if I mistake not, we shall have his grandson—if kisses mean anything. So Robin is thy Sweetheart, Sister : thou art a lucky girl. And we shall have Dad to preach to us. Well, I know not what will happen, but some will be knocked o' the head, and if Dad goes in the way of knocks——But, whatever happens, he will get his tongue again—and so he will be happy.'

'As for preaching,' he went on, speaking with due pauses, because there was no hurry in these dark lanes, and he was never one of those whose words flow easily, 'if he thinks to preach daily, as they say was done in Cromwell's time, I doubt if he will find many to listen, for by the look of the fellows who are crowding into camp they will love the clinking of the can better than the division of the text. But if he cause his friends to join, he will be welcomed : and for devoting his wife and daughter to the Cause, that, Sister, with submission, is rank nonsense, and the sooner you get out of the camp, if you must go there,

the better. Women aboard ship are bad enough, but in camp they are the very devil.'

'Barnaby, speak not lightly of the Evil One.'

'Where shall we bestow you when the fighting comes? Well, it shall be in some safe place.'

'Oh, Barnaby! will there be fighting?'

'Good lack, child! what else will there be?'

'As the walls of Jericho fell down at the blast of the trumpet, so the King's armies will be dispersed at the approach of the Lord's soldiers.'

'That was a vast long time ago, Sister. There is now no such trumpet-work employed in war, and no priests on the march; but plenty of fighting to be done before anything is accomplished. But have no fear. The country is rising. They are sick at heart already of a Popish King. I say not that it will be easy work; but it can be done, and it will be done, before we all sit down again.'

'And what will happen when it is done?'

'Truly, I know not. When one King is sent a-packing they must needs put up another, I suppose. My father shall have the biggest church in the country to preach in; Humphrey shall be made physician to the new King—nothing less; you shall marry Robin, and he shall be made a Duke or a Lord at least; and I shall have command of the biggest ship in the King's navy, and go to fight the Spaniards, or to trade for negroes on the Guinea Coast.'

'But suppose the Duke should be defeated?'

'Well, Sister, if he is defeated it will go hard with all of us. Those who are caught will be stabbed with a Bridport dagger, as they say. Ask not such a question; as well ask a sailor what will happen to him if his ship is cast away. Some may escape in boats and some by swimming, and some are drowned, and some are cast upon savage shores. Every man must take his chance. Never again ask such a

question. Nevertheless, I fear my father will get his neck as far in the noose as I myself. But remember, Sister Alice, do you and my mother keep snug. Let others carry on the rebellion, do you keep snug. For, d'ye see, a man takes his chance, and if there should happen (as there may) a defeat and the rout of these country lads, I could e'en scud by myself before the gale and maybe get to a seaport and so aboard and away while the chase was hot. But for a woman ! Keep snug, I say, therefore.'

The night, happily, was clear and fine. A slight breeze was blowing from the north-west, which made one shiver, yet it was not too cold. I heard the screech-owl once or twice, which caused me to tremble more than the cold. The road, when we left the high-way, which is not often mended in these parts, became a narrow lane full of holes and deep ruts, or else a track across open country. But Barnaby knew the way.

It was about ten of the clock when we began our journey, and it was six in the

morning when we finished it. I suppose there are few women who can boast of having taken so long a ride and in the night. Yet, strange to say, I felt no desire to sleep ; nor was I wearied with the jogging of the horse, but was sustained by something of the spirit of my father. A wonderful thing it seemed to me that a simple country maid, such as myself, should help in putting down the Catholic King ; women there have been who have played great parts in history—Jael, Deborah, Judith, and Esther, for example ; but that I should be called (since then I have discovered that I was not called), this, indeed, seemed truly wonderful. Then I was going forth to witness the array of a gallant army about to fight for freedom and for religion, just as they were arrayed forty years before, when Sir Christopher was a young man and rode among them.

My brother, this stout Barnaby, was one of them ; my father was one of them ; Humphrey was one of them ; and in a little while I was very sure (because Robin would

feel no peace of mind if I was with the insurgents and he was still at home) my lover would be with them too. And I pictured to myself a holy and serious camp, filled with godly, sober soldiers, listening to sermons and reading the Bible, going forth to battle with hymns upon their lips ; and withal so valiant that at their very first onset the battalions of the King would be shattered. Alas! anyone may guess the foolish thoughts of a girl who had no knowledge of the world, nor any experience. Yet all my life I had been taught that Resistance was at times a sacred duty, and that the Divine Right of the (so-called) Lord's Anointed was a vain superstition. So far, therefore, was I better prepared than most women for the work in hand.

When we rode through Sherborne all the folk were a-bed and the streets were empty. From Sherborne our way lay through Yetminster and Evershott to Beaminster, where we watered and rested the horses, and took some of Barnaby's provisions. The country through which we rode was full of memories

of the last great war. The castle of Sherborne was twice besieged; once by Lord Bedford, when the Marquis of Hertford held it for the King. That siege was raised; but it was afterwards taken by Fairfax, with its garrison of six hundred soldiers, and was then destroyed, so that it is now a heap of ruins; and as for Beaminster, the town hath never recovered from the great fire when Prince Maurice held it, and it is still half in ruins, though the ivy hath grown over the blackened walls of the burned houses. The last great war, of which I had heard so much! And now, perhaps, we were about to begin another.

It was two o'clock in the morning when we dismounted at Beaminster. My mother sat down upon a bench and fell instantly asleep. My father walked up and down impatiently, as grudging every minute. Barnaby, for his part, made a leisurely and comfortable meal, eating his bread and meat —of which I had some—and drinking his Canary with relish, as if we were on a journey

of pleasure and there was plenty of time for leisurely feeding. Presently he arose with a sigh (the food and wine being all gone), and said that, the horses being now rested, we might proceed. So he lifted my mother into her seat and we went on with the journey, the day now breaking.

The way, I say, was never tedious to me, for I was sustained by the novelty and the strangeness of the thing. Although I had a thousand things to ask Barnaby, it must be confessed that for one who had travelled so far he had marvellous little to tell. I dare-say that the deck and cabins of a ship are much the same whether she be on the Spanish Main or in the Bristol Channel, and sailors, even in port, are never an observant race, except of weather and so forth. It was strange, however, only to look upon him and to mark how stout a man he was grown and how strong, and yet how he still spoke like the old Barnaby, so good-natured and so dull with his book, who was daily flogged for his Latin grammar, and bore no malice, but pre-

pared himself to enjoy the present when the flogging was over, and not to anticipate the certain repetition of the flogging on the morrow. He spoke in the same slow way, as if speech were a thing too precious to be poured out quickly; and there was always sense in what he said (Barnaby was only stupid in the matter of syntax), though he gave me not such answers as I could have wished. However, he confessed, little by little, something of his history and adventures. When he ran away, it was, as we thought, to the port of Bristol, where he presently found a berth as cabin-boy on board a West Indiaman. In this truly enviable post—everybody on board has a cuff or a kick or a rope's-end for the boy—he continued for some time. 'But,' said Barnaby, 'you are not to think that the rope's-end was half so bad as my father's rod; nor the captain's oath so bad as my father's rebuke; nor the rough work and hard fare so bad as the Latin syntax.' Being so strong, and a hearty, willing lad to boot, he was quickly

promoted to be an able seaman, when there were no more rope's-endings for him. Then, having an ambition above his station, and not liking his rude and ignorant companions of the fo'k'sle (which is the fore-part of a ship, where the common sailors sleep and eat), and being so fortunate as to win the good graces of the supercargo first and of the captain next, he applied his leisure time (when he had any leisure) to the method of taking observations, of calculating longitudes and latitudes, his knowledge of arithmetic having fortunately stuck in his mind longer than that of Latin. These things, I understand, are of the greatest use to a sailor and necessary to an officer. Armed with this knowledge, and the recommendation of his superiors, Barnaby was promoted from before the mast and became what they call a mate, and so rose by degrees until he was at last second captain. But by this time he had made many voyages to the West Indies, to New York and Baltimore, and to the West Coast of Africa in the service of his owners, and, I daresay, had

procured much wealth for them, though but little for himself. And being at Rotterdam upon his owners' business, he was easily persuaded—being always a stout Protestant, and desirous to strike a blow in revenge for the ejection of his father—to engage as sailing Master on board the frigate which brought over the Duke of Monmouth and his company, and then to join him on his landing. This was the sum of what he had to tell me. He had seen many strange people, wonderful things, and monsters of the deep; Indians, whom the cruelty and avarice of the Spaniards have wellnigh destroyed, the sugar plantations in the islands, negro slaves, negroes free in their own country, sharks and calamaries (of which I had read and heard)—he had seen all these things, and still remained (in his mind, I mean) as if he had seen nothing. So wonderfully made are some men that whatever they see they are in no way moved.

I say, then, that Barnaby answered my questions, as we rode along, briefly, and as if

such matters troubled him not. When I asked him, for example, how the poor miserable slaves liked being captured and sold and put on board ship crowded together for so long a voyage, Barnaby replied that he did not know, his business being to buy them and carry them across the water, and if they rebelled on board ship to shoot them down or flog them; and when they got to Jamaica to sell them: where, if they would not work, they would be flogged until they came to a better mind. If a man was born a negro, what else, he asked, could he expect?

There was one question which I greatly desired to ask him, but dared not. It concerned the welfare of his soul. Presently, however, Barnaby answered that question, before I put it.

'Sister,' he said, 'my mother's constant affliction concerning me, before I ran away, was as to the salvation of my soul. And truly, that formerly seemed to me so difficult a thing to compass (like navigation to an unknown port over an unknown sea set

everywhere with hidden rocks and liable to sudden gusts) that I could not understand how a plain man could ever succeed in it. Wherefore it comforted me mightily after I got to sea to learn on good authority that there is another way, which, compared with my father's, is light and easy. In short, Sister, though he knows it not, there is one religion for lands-folk and another for sailor-folk. A sailor (everybody knows) cannot get so much as a sail bent without cursing and swearing—this, which is desperately wicked ashore, counts for nothing at all afloat: and so with many other things; and the long and the short of it is that if a sailor does his duty, fights his ship like a man, is true to his owners and faithful to his mess-mates, it matters not one straw whether he hath daily sworn great oaths, drunk himself (whenever he went ashore) as helpless as a log, and kissed a pretty girl whenever his good luck gave him the chance—which does, indeed, seldom come to most sailors'—he added this with a deep sigh—'I say, Sister,

that for such a sailor, when his ship goes down with him, or when he gets a grapeshot through his vitals, or when he dies of fever, as happens often enough in the hot climates, there is no question as to the safety of his soul, but he goes straight to heaven. What he is ordered to do when he gets there,' said Barnaby, 'I cannot say; but it will be something, I doubt not, that a sailor will like to do. No catechism or Latin syntax. Wherefore, Sister, you can set my mother's heart—poor soul!—quite at rest on this important matter. You can tell her that you have conversed with me, and that I have that very same inward assurance of which my father speaks so much and at such length. The very same assurance it is—tell her that. And beg her to ask me no questions upon the matter.'

'Well, Barnaby; but art thou sure'——

'It is a heavenly comfort,' he replied, before I had time to finish, 'to have such an assurance. For why? A man that hath it doth never more trouble himself about what

shall happen to him after he is dead. Therefore he goes about his duty with an easy mind; and so, Sister, no more upon this head, if you love me and desire peace of mind for my mother.'

So nothing more was said upon that subject then or afterwards. A sailor to be exempted by right of his calling from the religion of the landsman! 'Tis a strange and dangerous doctrine. But if all sailors believe it, yet how can it be? This question, I confess, is too high for me. And as for my mother, I gave her Barnaby's message, begging her at the same time not to question him further. And she sighed, but obeyed.

Presently Barnaby asked me if we had any money.

I had none, and I knew that my mother could have but little. Of course, my father never had any. I doubt if he had possessed a single penny since his ejection.

'Well,' said Barnaby, 'I thought to give my money to mother. But I now perceive that if she has it she will give it to Dad;

and if he has it, he will give it all to the Duke for the Cause—wherefore, Sister, do you take it and keep it, not for me, but to be expended as seemeth you best.' He lugged out of his pocket a heavy bag. 'Here is all the money I have saved in ten years. Nay—I am not as some sailors, one that cannot keep a penny in purse, but must needs fling all away. Here are two hundred and fifty gold pieces. Take them, Alice. Hang the bag round thy neck, and never part with it, day or night. And say nothing about the money either to mother or to Dad, for he will assuredly do with it as I have said. A time may come when thou wilt want it.'

Two hundred and fifty gold pieces! Was it possible that Barnaby could be so rich? I took the bag and hung it round my waist—not my neck—by the string which he had tied above the neck, and, as it was covered by my mantle, nobody ever suspected that I had this treasure. In the end, as you shall hear, it seemed to be useful.

It was now broad daylight, and the sun

was up. As we drew near Bridport there stood a man in the road armed with a halbert.

'Whither go ye, good people?' he asked. 'What is your business?'

'Friend,' said Barnaby, flourishing his oaken staff, 'we ride upon our own business. Stand aside, or thou mayest henceforth have no more business to do upon this earth!'

'Ride on then—ride on,' he replied, standing aside with great meekness. This was one of the guards whom they posted everywhere upon the roads in order to stop the people who were flocking to the camp. In this way many were sent back, and many were arrested on their way to join Monmouth.

Now, as we drew near to Bridport, the time being about four o'clock, we heard the firing of guns and a great shouting.

'They have begun the fighting,' said Barnaby. 'I knew it would not be long a-coming.'

It was, in fact, the first engagement, when the Dorsetshire Militia were driven out of

Bridport by the Duke's troops, and there would have been a signal victory at the very outset but for the cowardice of Lord Grey, who ran away with the Horse.

Well, it was a strange and a wonderful thing to think that close at hand were men killing each other on the Sabbath ; yea, and some lying wounded on the roads ; and that civil war had again begun.

'Let us push on,' said Humphrey, 'out of the way of these troops. They are but country lads all of them. If they retreat, they will run ; and if they run, they will be seized with a panic, and will run all the way back to Lyme, trampling on everything that is in the road.'

This was sound advice, which we followed, taking an upper track which brought us into the high road a mile or so nearer Charmouth.

I do not think there can be anywhere a finer road than that which runs from Charmouth to Lyme. It runneth over high hills, sometimes above the sea which rolls far

below, and sometimes above a great level inland plain, the name of which I have forgotten. The highest of the hills is called Golden Cap ; the reason why was plainly shown this morning when the sky was clear and the sun was shining from the south-east full upon this tall pico. When we got into this road we found it full of young fellows, lusty and well conditioned, all marching, running, walking, shouting, and singing on their way to join Monmouth. Some were adorned with flowers, some wore the blue favour of the Duke, some had cockades in their hats, and some again were armed with musket or with sword ; some carried pikes, some knives tied on to long poles, some had nothing but thick cudgels, which they brandished valiantly. At sight of these brave fellows my father lifted his head and waved his hand, crying 'A Monmouth ! a Monmouth ! Follow me, brave lads !' just as if he had been a captain encouraging his men to charge.

The church of Lyme standeth high upon

the cliff which faces the sea: it is on the eastern side of the town, and before you get to the church, on the way from Charmouth, there is a broad field also on the edge of the cliff. It was this field that was the first camp of Monmouth's men. There were no tents for the men to lie in, but there were waggons filled, I suppose, with munitions of war: there were booths where things were sold, such as hot sausages fried over a charcoal fire, fried fish, lobsters and periwinkles, cold bacon and pork, bread, cheese, and such like, and barrels of beer and cider on wooden trestles. The men were haggling for the food and drink, and already one or two seemed fuddled. Some were exercising in the use of arms; some were dancing, and some singing. And no thought or respect paid at all to the Sabbath. Oh! was this the pious and godly camp which I had expected?

'Sister,' said Barnaby, 'this is a godly and religious place to which the wisdom of Dad hath brought thee. Perhaps he meaneth thee to lie in the open like the lads.'

'Where is the Duke?' asked my father, looking wrathfully at these revellers and Sabbath-breakers.

'The Duke lies at the George Inn,' said Barnaby. 'I will show the way.'

In the blue parlour of the George the Duke was at that time holding a council. There were different reports as to the Bridport affair. Already it was said that Lord Grey was unfit to lead the horse, having been the first to run away; and some said that the Militia were driven out of the town in a panic, and some that they made a stand and that our men had fled. I know not what was the truth, and now it matters little, except that the first action of our men brought them little honour. When the council was finished, the Duke sent word that he would receive Dr. Challis (that was Humphrey) and Dr. Comfort Eykin.

So they were introduced to the presence of his Grace, and first my father—as Humphrey told me—fell into a kind of ecstasy, praising God for the landing of the Duke, and

foretelling such speedy victory as would lay the enemies of the country at his feet. He then drew forth a roll of paper in which he had set down, for the information of the Duke, the estimated number of the disaffected in every town of the south and west of England, with the names of such as could be trusted not only to risk their own bodies and estates in the Cause, but would stir up and encourage their friends. There were so many on these lists that the Duke's eyes brightened as he read them.

'Sir,' he said, 'if these reports can be depended upon, we are indeed made men. What is your opinion, Dr. Challis?'

'My opinion, Sir, is that these are the names of friends and well-wishers; if they see your Grace well supported at the outset they will flock in; if not, many of them will stand aloof.'

'Will Sir Christopher join me?' asked the Duke.

'No, Sir; he is now seventy-five years of age.'

The Duke turned away. Presently he returned to the lists and asked many more questions.

'Sir,' said my father, at length, 'I have given you the names of all that I know who are well affected to the Protestant Cause: they are those who have remained faithful to the ejected Ministers. Many a time have I secretly preached to them. One thing is wanting: the assurance that your Grace will bestow upon us liberty of conscience and freedom of worship. Else will not one of them move hand or foot.'

'Why,' said the Duke, 'for what other purpose am I come? Assure them, good friend, assure them in my name; make the most solemn pledge that is in your power and in mine.'

'In that case, Sir,' said my father, 'I will at once write letters with my own hand to the brethren everywhere. There are many honest country lads who will carry the letters by ways where they are not likely to be arrested and searched. And now, Sir, I pray your leave to preach to these your soldiers They are at

present drinking, swearing, and breaking the Sabbath. The campaign which should be begun with prayer and humiliation for the sins of the country hath been begun with many deadly sins, with merriment, and with fooling. Suffer me, then, to preach to them.'

'Preach, by all means,' said the Duke. 'You shall have the parish church. I fear, Sir, that my business will not suffer me to have the edification of your sermon, but I hope that it will tend to the soberness and earnestness of my men. Forgive them, Sir, for their lightness of heart. They are for the most part young. Encourage them by promises rather than by rebuke. And so, Sir, for this occasion, farewell!'

In this way my father obtained the wish of his heart, and preached once more in a church before the people who were the young soldiers of Monmouth's army.

I did not hear that sermon, because I was asleep. It was in tones of thunder that my father preached to them. He spoke of the old war, and the brave deeds that their fathers had

done under Cromwell : theirs was the victory. Now, as then, the victory should be theirs, if they carried the spirit of faithfulness into battle. He warned them of their sins, sparing none ; and, in the end, he concluded with such a denunciation of the King as made all who heard it, and had been taught to regard the King's Majesty as sacred, open their mouths and gape upon each other ; for then, for the first time, they truly understood what it was that they were engaged to do.

While my father waited to see the Duke, Barnaby went about looking for a lodging. The town is small, and the houses were all filled, but he presently found a cottage (call it rather a hut) on the shore beside the Cobb, where, on promise of an extravagant payment, the fisherman's wife consented to give up her bed to my mother and myself. Before the bargain was concluded, I had laid myself down upon it and was sound asleep.

So I slept the whole day ; though outside there was such a trampling on the beach, such a landing of stores and creaking of chains as

might have awakened the Seven Sleepers. But me nothing could awaken.

In the evening I woke up refreshed. My mother was already awake, but for weariness could not move out of her chair. The good woman of the cottage, a kindly soul, brought me rough food of some kind with a drink of water—the army had drunk up all the milk, eaten all the cheese, the butter, the eggs, and the pork, beef, and mutton in the place. And then Humphrey came and asked if I would go with him into the town to see the soldiers. So I went, and glad I was to see the sight. But, Lord! to think that it was the Sabbath evening! For the main street of Lyme was full of men, swaggering with long swords at their sides, and some with spurs—feathers in their hats, and pistols stuck in their belts, all were talking loud, as I am told is the custom in a camp of soldiers. Outside the George there was a barrel on a stand, and vendors and drawers ran about with cans, fetching and carrying the liquor for which the men continually called. Then at the door of the George

there appeared the Duke himself with his following of gentlemen. All rose and huzzaed while the Duke came down the steps and turned towards the camp outside the town.

I saw his face very well as he passed. Indeed, I saw him many times afterwards, but I declare that my heart sank when first I gazed upon him as he stood upon the steps of the George Inn. For on his face, plain to read, was the sadness of coming ruin. I say I knew from that moment what would be his end. Nay, I am no prophetess, nor am I a witch to know beforehand the counsels of the Almighty ; yet the Lord hath permitted by certain signs the future to become apparent to those who know how to read them. In the Duke of Monmouth the signs were a restless and uneasy eye, an air of preoccupation, a trembling mouth, and a hesitating manner. There was in him nothing of the confidence of one who knows that fortune is about to smile upon him. This, I say, was my first thought about the Duke, and the first thought is prophecy.

There sat beside the benches a secretary, or

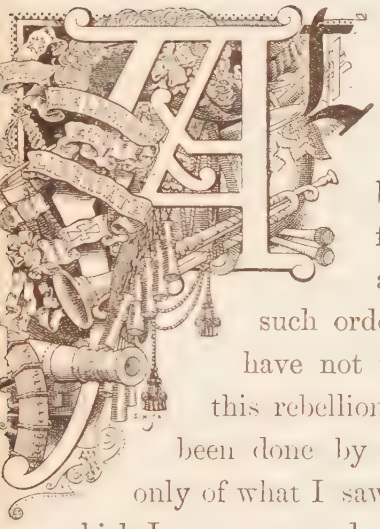
clerk, who took down the names of recruits. The Duke stopped and looked on. A young man, in a sober suit of brown, in appearance different from the country lads, was giving in his name.

'Daniel Foe, your Grace,' said the clerk, looking up. 'He is from London.'

'From London,' the Duke repeated. 'I have many friends in London. I expect them shortly. Thou art a worthy lad and deservest encouragement.' So he passed on his way.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE MARCH.



daybreak, next morning, the drums began to beat and the trumpets began to blow, and after breakfast the newly-raised army marched out in such order as was possible. I have not to write a history of this rebellion, which hath already been done by able hands; I speak only of what I saw, and the things with which I was concerned.

First, then, it is true that the whole country was swiftly put into a ferment by the Duke's landing; and had those who

planned the expedition provided a proper supply of arms, the army would have quickly mustered 20,000 men, all resolute and capable of meeting any force that the King could have raised. Nay, it would have grown and swelled as it moved. But there were never enough arms from the outset. Everything at first promised well for the Duke. But there were not arms for the half of those who came in. The spirit of the Devon and Somerset Militia was lukewarm; they ran at Bridport, at Axminster, and at Chard; nay, some of them even deserted to join the Duke. There were thousands scattered about the country—those, namely, who still held to the doctrines of the persecuted ministers, and those who abhorred the Catholic religion—who wished well and would have joined—Humphrey knew wellwishers by the thousand whose names were on the lists in Holland—but how could they join when the army was so ill-found? And this was the principal reason, I have been assured, why the country gentlemen, with their following, did not come in at first

—because there were no arms. How can soldiers fight when they have no arms? How could the Duke have been suffered to begin with so scanty a preparation of arms? Afterwards, when Monmouth proclaimed himself King, there were, perhaps, other reasons why the wellwishers held aloof. Some of them certainly, who were known to be friends of the Duke (among them our old friend Mr. Prideaux, of Ford Abbey), were arrested and thrown into prison, while many thousands who were flocking to the standard were either turned back upon the road or seized and thrown into prison.

As for the quality of the troops which formed the army, I know nothing, except that at Sedgemoor they continued to fight valiantly after their leaders had fled. They were raw troops—mere country lads—and their officers were, for the most part, simple tradesmen who had no knowledge of the art of war. Dare the younger was a goldsmith; Captain Perrot was a dyer; Captain Hucker, a maker of serge; and so on with all of them. It was

unfortunate that Mr. Andrew Fletcher, of Saltoun, should have killed Mr. Dare the elder on the first day, because, as everybody agrees, the former was the most experienced soldier in the whole army.

The route proposed by the Duke was known to everybody. He intended to march through Taunton, Bridgwater, and Bristol to Gloucester, where he thought he would be joined by a new army raised by his friends in Cheshire. He also reckoned on receiving adherents everywhere on the road, and on easily defeating any force that the King should be able to send against him. How he fared in that notable scheme is common history.

Long before the army was ready to march, Humphrey came to advise with us. First of all, he endeavoured to have speech with my father, but in vain (henceforth my father seemed to have no thought of his wife and daughter). Humphrey, therefore, advised us to go home. 'As for your alleged dedication to the Cause,' he said, 'I think that he hath

already forgotten it, seeing that it means nothing, and that your presence with us cannot help. Go home, then, Madam, and let Alice persuade Robin to stay at home in order to take care of you.'

'Nay,' said my mother; 'that may we not do. I must obey my husband, who commanded us to follow him. Whither he goeth thither also I will follow.'

Finding that she was resolute upon this point, Humphrey told us that the Duke would certainly march upon Taunton, where more than half of the town were his friends. He therefore advised that we should ride to that place—not following the army but going across the country, most of which is a very wild and desolate part, where we should be in no danger except from gipsies and such wild people, robbers and rogues, truly, but now making the most of the disturbed state of the country and running about the roads plundering and thieving. But he said he would himself provide us with a guide, one who knew the way, and a good stout fellow, armed

with a cudgel, at least. To this my mother agreed, fearing to anger her husband if she should disturb him at his work.

Humphrey had little trouble in finding the guide for us. He was an honest lad from a place called Holford, in the Quantock Hills, who, finding that there were no arms for him, was going home again. Unhappily, when we got to Taunton, he was persuaded—partly by me, alas !—to remain. He joined Barnaby's company, and was either killed at Sedgemoor, or was one of those hanged at Weston Zoyland, or Bridgwater. For he was no more heard of.

This business settled, we went up to the churchyard in order to see the march of the army out of camp. And a brave show the gallant soldiers made.

First rode Colonel Wade with the vanguard. After them, with a due interval, rode the greater part of the Horse, already three hundred strong, under Lord Grey of Wark. Among them was the company sent by Mr. Speke, of White Lackington, forty very stout

fellows, well armed and mounted on cart-horses. The main army was composed of four regiments. The first was the Blue Regiment, or the Duke's Own, whose Colonel was the aforesaid Wade. They formed the van, and were seven hundred strong. The others were the White, commanded by Colonel Foukes; the Green, by Colonel Holmes; and the Yellow, by Colonel Fox. All these regiments were fully armed, the men wearing favours or rosettes in their hats and on their arms of the colour from which their regiment was named.

The Duke himself, who rode a great white horse, was surrounded by a small bodyguard of gentlemen (afterwards they became a company of forty), richly dressed and well mounted. With him were carried the colours, embroidered with the words 'Pro Religione et Libertate.' This was the second time that I had seen the Duke, and again I felt at sight of his face the foreknowledge of coming woe. On such an occasion the chief should show a gallant mien and a face of cheerful hope. The

Duke, however, looked gloomy, and hung his head.

Truly, it seemed to me as if no force could dare so much as to meet this great and invincible army. And certainly there could nowhere be gathered together a more stalwart set of soldiers, nearly all young men, and full of spirit. They shouted and sang as they marched. Presently there passed us my brother Barnaby, with his company of the Green Regiment. It was easy to perceive by the handling of his arms and by his bearing that he was accustomed to act with others, and already he had so begun to instruct his men that they set an example to the rest both in their orderliness of march and the carriage of their weapons.

After the main army they carried the ordnance—four small cannon—and the ammunition in waggons with guards and horsemen. Lastly there rode those who do not fight, yet belong to the army. These were the Chaplain to the army, Dr. Hooke, a grave clergyman of the Church of England; Mr.

Ferguson, the Duke's private Chaplain, a fiery person, of whom many hard things have been said, which here concern us not; and my father, who thus rode openly with the other two, in order that the Nonconformists might be encouraged by his presence, as an equal with the two Chaplains. He was clad in a new cassock, obtained I know not whence. He sat upright in the saddle, a Bible in his hand, his long white locks lying on his shoulders like a perruque, but more venerable than any wig. His thin face was flushed with the joy of coming victory, and his eyes flashed fire. If all the men had shown such a spirit, the army would have overrun the whole country. The four surgeons—Dr. Temple, Dr. Gaylard, Dr. Oliver, and Humphrey—followed, all splendid in black velvet and great periwigs. Lastly marched the rear-guard; and after the army there followed such a motley crew as no one can conceive. There were gipsies, with their black tents and carts, ready to rob and plunder; there were tinkers, who are nothing better than gipsies,

and are even said to speak their language; there were men with casks on wheels filled with beer or cider; there were carts carrying bread, cakes, biscuits, and such things as one can buy in a booth or at a fair; there were women of bold and impudent looks, singing as they walked; there were, besides, whole troops of country lads, some of them mere boys, running and strutting along in hopes to receive arms and to take a place in the regiments.

Presently they were all gone, and Lyme was quit of them. What became in the end of all the rabble rout which followed the army I know not. One thing was certain: the godly disposition, the pious singing of psalms, and the devout exposition of the Word which I had looked for in the army were not anywhere apparent. Rather there was evident a tumultuous joy, as of schoolboys out for a holiday—certainly no schoolboys could have made more noise or showed greater happiness in their faces. Among them, however, there were some men of middle age, whose faces

showed a different temper; but these were rare.

'Lord help them!' said our friendly fisherwoman, who stood with us. 'There will be hard knocks before those fine fellows go home again.'

'They fight on the Lord's side,' said my mother; 'therefore, they may be killed, but they will not wholly perish.'

As for the hard knocks, they began without any delay, and on that very morning. For at Axminster they encountered the Somerset and Devon Militia, who thought to join their forces, but were speedily put to flight by the rebels—a victory which greatly encouraged them.

It hath been maliciously said, I have heard, that we followed the army—as if we were two sutler women—on foot, I suppose, tramping in the dust, singing ribald songs like those poor creatures whom we saw marching out of Lyme. You have heard how we agreed to follow Humphrey's advice. Well, we left Lyme very early the next

morning (our fisherwoman having now become very friendly and loth to let us go) and rode out, our guide (poor lad ! his death lies heavy on my soul, yet I meant the best : and, truly, he was on the side of the Lord) marching beside us armed with a stout bludgeon. We kept the main road (which was very quiet at this early hour) as far as Axminster, where we left it ; and, after crossing the river by a ford or wash, we engaged upon a track, or path, which led along the banks of a little stream for a mile or two—as far as the village of Chardstock. Here we made no halt ; but, leaving it behind, we struck into a most wild and mountainous country full of old forests and great bare places. It is called the Forest of Neroche, and is said to shelter numbers of gipsies and vagabonds, and to have in it some of those wild people who live in the hills and woods of Somerset, and do no work except to gather the dry broom and tie it up and sell it, and so live hard and hungry lives, but know not any master. These are reported to be a harmless people, but the gipsies are dangerous

because they are ready to rob and even murder. I thought of Barnaby's bag of gold tied about my waist, and trembled. However, we met with none of them on our journey, because just then they were all running after Monmouth's army. There was no path over the hills by the way we took ; but our guide knew the country so well that he needed none, pointing out all the hills with a kind of pride as if they belonged to him, and telling us the name of every one ; but these I have long since forgotten. The country, however, I can never forget, because it is so wild and beautiful. One place I remember. It is a very strange and wonderful place. The ground here is high, and at one place it rises to a kind of point or hill, falling away, on all sides but one, in steep sides, up which a man could climb with difficulty. Round the hill have been cut deep trenches, no doubt to fortify and strengthen the place, which is by nature a fortress. And on the side where the ground is level there are raised very high earthworks or walls with trenches beyond, most wonderful

to consider. Within this double or triple circle of trenches and earthen walls there stands a farm house, solitary among the hills. Here we found an ancient dame who told us that the place had been a castle of the Romans: yet it was not like unto the castle at Sherborne, which Oliver Cromwell slighted after he took the place, blowing it up with gunpowder: nor was it like the castle at Taunton which I afterwards saw, for there were no stone walls or towers, or any appearance of stone work. To be sure, Sherborne Castle was not built by the Romans. Then this old dame showed us bits of pots dug up within the walls, and rusty arrow heads, and green copper things, which she said were buckles to fasten their clothes withal. She gave us a cup of cider while we rested and took here our dinner of cold bacon and bread which we had brought with us. After dinner our guide took us to the hill called the Beacon, and showed us the broad Vale of Taunton, spread out below us like unto a map, with its farmhouses, fields, orchards, and churches.

'And all for Monmouth,' he said. Surely there cannot be a richer, more fertile, or more lovely place in all England than the Vale of Taunton. When we had rested, and enjoyed this enchanting prospect, we remounted our nags and descended by a gradual incline into the plain below. Humphrey had provided us with a letter commendatory. He, who knew the names of all who were well affected, assured us that the lady to whom the letter was addressed, Miss Susan Blake by name, was one of the most forward in the Protestant Cause. She was well known and much respected, and she kept a school for young gentlewomen, where many children of the Nonconformist gentry were educated. He instructed us to proceed directly to her house, and to ask her to procure for us a decent and safe lodging. He could not have given us a letter to any better person.

It was late in the afternoon when we rode into Taunton. The streets were full of people running about, talking now in groups and now by twos and threes; now shouting

and now whispering ; while we rode along the street, a man ran bawling—

'Great news ! great news ! Monmouth is upon us with twice ten thousand men !'

It seems that they had only that day learned of the defeat of the Militia by the rebels. A company of the Somerset Militia were in the town, under Colonel Luttrell, in order to keep down the people.

Taunton is, as everybody knows, a most rich, prosperous, and populous town. I had never before seen so many houses and so many people gathered together. Why, if the men of Taunton declared for the Duke, his cause, one felt sure, was already won. For there is nowhere, as I could not fail to know, a greater stronghold of Dissent than this town, except London, and none where the Nonconformists have more injuries to remember. Only two years before this their meeting-houses had been broken into, and their pulpits and pews brought out and burned, and they were forced, against their conscience, to worship in the parish church.

We easily found Miss Blake's house, and, giving our horses to the guide, we presented her with our letter. She was a young woman somewhat below the common stature, quick of speech, her face and eyes full of vivacity, and about thirty years of age. But when she had read the letter, and understood who we were and whence we came, she first made a deep reverence to my mother, and then she took my hands and kissed me.

'Madam,' she said, 'believe me, my poor house will be honoured indeed by the presence of the wife and the daughter of the godly Dr. Comfort Eykin. Pray, pray, go no further. I have a room that is at your disposal. Go thither, Madam. I beg, and rest after your journey. The wife of Doctor Comfort Eykin! 'Tis indeed an honour.' And so with the kindest words she led us upstairs, and gave us a room with a bed in it, and caused water for washing to be brought, and presently went out with me to buy certain things needful for us (who were indeed somewhat rustical in our dress), in order that we might present the ap-

pearance of gentlewomen—thanks to Barnaby's heavy purse, I could get them without troubling my mother's careful mind about the cost. She then gave us supper, and told us all the news. The King, she said, was horribly afraid, and it was rumoured that the priests had all been sent away to France; the Taunton people were resolved to give the Duke a brave reception; all over the country, there was no doubt, men would rally by thousands; she was in a rapture of joy and gratitude. Supper over, she took us to her school-room, and here—oh! the pretty sight!—her school-girls were engaged in working and embroidering flags for the Duke's army.

'I know not,' she said, 'whether his Grace will condescend to receive them. But it is all we women can do.' Poor wretch! she afterwards suffered the full penalty for her zeal.

All that evening we heard the noise of men running about the town, with the clanking of weapons and the commands of officers; but we knew not what had happened.

'Her schoolgirls were engaged in working and embroidering flags for the Duke's army.'

Lo ! in the morning the glad tidings that the Militia had left the town. Nor was that all : for at daybreak the people began to assemble, and, there being none to stay them, broke into the great church of St. Mary's, and took possession of the arms that had been deposited for safety in the tower. They also opened the prison and set free a worthy Nonconformist divine, named Vincent. All the morning the mob ran about the streets, shouting, 'A Monmouth ! A Monmouth !' the magistrates and Royalists not daring so much as to show their faces, and there was nothing talked of but the overthrow of the King and the triumph of the Protestant religion. Nay, there were fiery speakers in the market-place and before the west porch of the church, who mounted on tubs and exhorted the people. Grave merchants came forth and shook hands with each other ; and godly ministers who had been in hiding walked forth boldly. It was truly a great day for Taunton.

The excitement grew greater when

Captain Hucker, a well-known serge-maker of the town, rode in with a troop of Monmouth's Horse. Captain Hucker had been seized by Colonel Phillips on the charge of receiving a message from the Duke, but he escaped and joined the rebels, to his greater loss, as afterwards appeared. However, he now rode in to tell his fellow-townsmen of his own wonderful and providential escape, and that the Duke would certainly arrive the next day, and he exhorted them to give him such a welcome as he had a right to expect at their hands. He also reminded them that they were the sons of the men who, forty years before, defended Taunton under Admiral Blake. There was a great shouting and tossing of caps after Captain Hucker's address, and no one could do too much for the horsemen with him, so that I fear these brave fellows were soon fain to lie down and sleep till the fumes of the strong ale should leave their brains.

All that day and half the night we sat in Miss Blake's schoolroom finishing the flags,

in which I was permitted to join. There were twenty-seven flags in all presented to the army by the Taunton maids: twelve by Miss Blake, and fifteen by one Mrs. Musgrave, also a schoolmistress. And now, indeed, seeing that the Militia at Axminster had fled almost at the mere aspect of one man, and that those of Taunton had also fled away secretly by night, and catching the zeal of our kind entertainer, and considering the courage and spirit of these good people, I began to feel confident again, and my heart, which had fallen very low at the sight of the Duke's hanging head and gloomy looks, rose again, and all dangers seemed to vanish. And so, in a mere fool's paradise, I continued happy indeed, until the fatal news of Sedgemoor fight awoke us all from our fond dreams.

CHAPTER XVII.

TAUNTON.

I NEVER weary in thinking of the gaiety and happiness of those four days at Taunton among the rebels. There was no more doubt in any of our hearts: we were all confident of victory—and that easy and, perhaps, bloodless. As was the rejoicing at Taunton, so it would be in every town of the country. One only had to look out of window in order to feel assurance of that victory, so jolly, so happy, so confident looked every face.

'Why,' said Miss Blake, 'in future ages even we women, who have only worked the flags, will be envied for our share in the glorious deliverance. Great writers will speak of us as they speak of the Roman women.'

Then all our eyes sparkled, and the needles flew faster, and the flags grew nearer to completion.

If history should condescend to remember the poor Maids of Taunton at all, it will be, at best, with pity for the afflictions which afterwards fell upon them : none, certainly, will envy them ; but we shall be forgotten. Why should we be remembered ? Women, it is certain, have no business with affairs of State, and especially none with rebellions and civil wars. Our hearts and passions carry us away. The leaders in the cause which we have joined appear to us to be more than human ; we cannot restrain ourselves, we fall down and worship our leaders, especially in the cause of religion and liberty.

Now behold ! On the very morning after we arrived at Taunton I was abroad in the streets with Miss Blake, looking at the town, which hath shops full of the most beautiful and precious things, and wondering at the great concourse of people (for the looms were all deserted, and the workmen were in the

streets filled with a martial spirit), when I saw riding into the town no other than Robin himself. Oh ! how my heart leaped up to see him ! He was most gallantly dressed in a purple coat, with a crimson sash over his shoulders to carry his sword ; he had pistols in his holsters, and wore great riding-boots, and with him rode a company of a dozen young men, mounted on good strong nags : why, they were men of our own village, and I knew them, every one. They were armed with muskets and pikes—I knew where those came from—and when they saw me the fellows all began to grin, and to square their shoulders so as to look more martial. But Robin leaped from his horse.

'Tis Alice!' he cried. 'Dear heart! Thou art then safe, so far? Madam, your servant.' Here he took off his hat to Miss Blake. 'Lads, ride on to the White Hart and call for what you want, and take care of the nags. This is a joyful meeting, Sweetheart.' Here he kissed me. 'The Duke, they say, draws thousands daily. I thought

to find him in Taunton by this time. Why, we are as good as victorious already. Humphrey, I take it, is with his Grace. My dear, even had the Cause of Freedom failed to move me, I had been dragged by the silken ropes of Love. Truly, I could not choose but come. There was the thought of these brave fellows marching to battle, and I all the time skulking at home, who had ever been so loud upon their side. And there was the thought of Humphrey, braving the dangers of the field, tender though he be, and I, strong and lusty, sitting by the fire, and sleeping on a feather bed; and always there was the thought of thee, my dear, among these rude soldiers—like Milton's lady among the rabble rout, because well I know that even Christian warriors (so-called) are not lambs; and, again, there was my grandfather, who could find no rest, but continually walked to and fro, with looks that at one time said, 'Go, my son,' and at others, 'Nay; lest thou receive a hurt'; and the white face of my mother, which said, as plain as eyes could speak: 'He ought

to go, he ought to go ; and yet he may be killed.'

'Oh, Robin! Pray God there prove to be no more fighting.'

'Well, my dear, if I am not tedious to Madam here'——

'Oh, Sir!' said Miss Blake, 'it is a joy to hear this talk.' She told me, afterwards, that it was also a joy to look upon so gallant a gentleman, and such a pair of lovers. She, poor creature, had no sweetheart.

'Then on Monday,' Robin continued, 'the day before yesterday, I could refrain no longer, but laid the matter before my grandfather. Sweetheart! there is, I swear, no better man in all the world.'

'Of that I am well assured, Robin.'

'First, he said that if anything befell me he should go down in sorrow to his grave ; yet that, as to his own end, an old man so near the grave should not be concerned about the manner of his end so long as he should keep to honour and duty. Next, that in his own youth he had himself gone forth willingly

to fight in the cause of Liberty, without counting the risk. Thirdly, that if my conscience did truly urge me to follow the Duke, I ought to obey that voice in the name of God. And this with tears in his eyes, and yet a lively and visible satisfaction that, as he himself had chosen, so his grandson would choose. 'Sir,' I said, 'that voice of conscience speaks out very loudly and clearly. I cannot stifle it. Therefore, by your good leave, I will go.' Then he bade me take the best horse in the stable, and gave me a purse of gold, and so I made ready.'

Miss Blake, at this point, said that she was reminded of David. It was, I suppose, because Robin was so goodly a lad to look upon; otherwise, David, though an exile, did never endeavour to pull King Saul from his throne.

'Then,' Robin continued, 'I went to my mother. She wept, because war hath many dangers and chances; but she would not say me "Nay." And in the evening when the men came home I went into the village and asked who would go with me. A dozen

stout fellows—you know them all, Sweetheart—stepped forth at once ; another dozen would have come, but their wives prevented them. And so, mounting them on good cart-horses, I bade farewell and rode away.'

'Sir,' said Miss Blake, 'you have chosen the better part. You will be rewarded by so splendid a victory that it will surprise all the world ; and for the rest of your life—yes ; and for generations afterwards—you will be ranked among the deliverers of your country. It is a great privilege, Sir, to take part in the noblest passage of English history. Oh!' she clasped her hands, 'I am sorry that I am not a man, only because I would strike a blow in this sacred Cause. But we are women, and we can but pray—and make flags. We cannot die for the Cause.'

The event proved that women can sometimes die for the Cause, because she herself, if any woman ever did, died for her Cause.

Then Robin left us in order to take steps about his men and himself. Captain Hucker received them in the name of the Duke.

They joined the cavalry, and Robin was told that he should be made a Captain. This done, he rode out with the rest to meet the Duke.

Now, when his approach was known, everybody who had a horse rode forth to meet him, so that there followed him, when he entered the town, not counting his army, so great a company that they almost made another army.

As soon as it was reported that the Duke was within a mile (they had that day marched sixteen miles, from Ilminster) the church bells were set a-ringing; children came out with baskets of flowers in readiness to strew them at his feet as he should pass—there were roses and lilies and all kinds of summer flowers, so that his horse had a most delicate carpet to walk upon; the common people crowded the sides of the streets; the windows were filled with ladies, who waved their handkerchiefs and called aloud on Heaven to bless the good Duke, the brave Duke, the sweet and lovely Duke. If there were any malcontents

in the town they kept snug ; it would have cost them dear even to have been seen in the streets that day. The Duke showed on this occasion a face full of hope and happiness ; indeed, if he had not shown a cheerful countenance on such a day, he would have been something less, or something greater, than human. I mean that he would have been either insensible and blockish not to be moved by such a welcome, or else he would have been a prophet, as foreseeing what would follow. He rode bareheaded, carrying his hat in his hand ; he was dressed in a shining corslet with a blue silk scarf and a purple coat ; his long brown hair hung in curls upon his shoulders ; his sweet lips were parted with a gracious smile ; his beautiful brown eyes—never had any Prince more lovely eyes—looked pleased and benignant ; truly there was never made any man more comely than the Duke of Monmouth. The face of his father, and that of his uncle, King James, were dark and gloomy, but the Duke's face was naturally bright and cheerful ; King

Charles's long nose in him was softened and reduced to the proportions of manly beauty; in short, there was no feature that in his father was harsh and unpleasing but was in him sweet and beautiful. If I had thought him comely and like a King's son when four years before he made his Progress, I thought him now ten times as gracious and as beautiful. He was thinner in the face, which gave his appearance the greater dignity; he had ever the most gracious smile and the most charming eyes; and at such a moment as this who could believe the things which they said about his wife and Lady Wentworth? No—they were inventions of his enemies; they must be base lies; so noble a Presence could not conceal a guilty heart; he must be as good and virtuous as he was brave and lovely. Thus we talked, sitting in the window, and thus we cheered our souls. Even now, to think how great and good he looked on that day, it is difficult to believe that he was in some matters so vile. I am not of those who expect one kind of moral conduct from one man and a different kind from

another ; there is but one set of commandments for rich and poor, for prince and peasant. But the pity of it, oh ! the pity of it, with such a Prince !

Never, in short, did one see such a tumult of joy ; it is impossible to speak otherwise : the people had lost their wits with excess of joy. Nor did they show their welcome in shouting only, for all doors were thrown wide open, and supplies and necessaries of all kinds were sent to the soldiers in the camp outside the town, so that the country lads declared they had never fared more sumptuously. There now rode after the Duke several Nonconformist ministers, beside my father. Thus there was the pious Mr. Larke, of Lyme : he was an aged Baptist preacher, who thought it no shame to his profession to gird on a sword and to command a troop of horse ; and others there were, whose names I forget, who had come forth to join the deliverer.

Lord Grey rode on one side of him, and Colonel Speke on the other ; Dr. Hooke, the Chaplain, and my father rode behind. My

heart swelled with joy to hear how the people, when they had shouted themselves hoarse, cried out for my father, because his presence showed that they would have once more that liberty of worship for want of which they had so long languished. The Duke's own Chaplain, Mr. Ferguson, had got a naked sword in his hand, and was marching on foot, crying out, in a most vainglorious manner, 'I am Ferguson, the famous Ferguson, that Ferguson for whose head so many hundred pounds were offered. I am that man ! I am that man !' He wore a great gown and a silken cassock, which consorted ill with the sword in his hand, and in the evening he preached in the great church, while my father preached in the old meeting-house to a much larger congregation, and, I venture to think, with a much more edifying discourse.

The army marched through the town in much the same order as it had marched out of Lyme, and it seemed not much bigger, but the men marched more orderly and there was less laughing and shouting. But the streets were

so thronged that the men could hardly make their way.

In the market-place the Duke halted, while his Declaration was read aloud. One thing I could not approve. They dragged forth three of the Justices—High Churchmen and standing stoutly for King James—and forced them to listen, bareheaded, to the Declaration: a thing which came near afterwards to their destruction. Yet they looked sour and unwilling, as anyone would have testified. The Declaration was a long document, and the reading of it took half an hour at least; but the people cheered all the time.

After this, they read a Proclamation, warning the soldiers against taking aught without payment. But Robin laughed, saying that this was the way with armies, where the General was always on the side of virtue, yet the soldiers were always yielding to temptation in the matter of sheep and poultry, that human nature must not be too much tempted, and that camp rations are sometimes scanty. But it was a noble Proclamation, and I cannot but

believe that the robberies afterwards complained of were committed by the tattered crew who followed the camp, rather than by the brave fellows themselves.

The Duke lay at Captain Hucker's house, over against the Three Cups Inn. This was a great honour for Mr. Hucker, a plain serge-maker, and there were many who were envious, thinking that the Duke should not have gone to the house of so humble a person. It was also said that for his services Mr. Hucker boasted that he should expect nothing less than a coronet and the title of Peer, once the business was safely dispatched. A Peer to be made out of a Master Serge-maker ! But we must charitably refuse to believe all that is reported, and, indeed (I say it with sorrow of that most unfortunate lady, Miss Blake), much idle tattle concerning neighbours was carried on in her house, and I was told that it was the same in every house of Taunton, so that the women spent all their time in talking of their neighbours' affairs, and what might be going on in the houses of their friends. This is a

kind of talk which my father would never permit, as testifying to idle curiosity and leading to undue importance concerning things which are fleeting and trivial.

However, the Duke was bestowed in Captain Hucker's best bed—of that there was no doubt; and the bells rang, and bonfires blazed, and the people sang and shouted in the streets.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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